HUNGRY NO MORE:
A FOOD SYSTEM STUDY &
HUNGER-FREE COMMUNITY PLAN FOR SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

A Professional Project
presented to
the Faculty of California Polytechnic State University,
San Luis Obispo

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of City and Regional Planning

by
Jenny Cadigan

June 2012

© 2012
Jenny Cadigan
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

TITLE: Hungry No More: A Food System Study & Hunger-Free
Community Plan for San Luis Obispo County

AUTHOR: Jenny Cadigan

DATE SUBMITTED: June 2012

COMMITTEE CHAIR: Dr. Kelly D. Main, Assistant Professor, Cal Poly

CLIENT: Joel Diringer Project Manager, Hunger-Free Communities
Grant

COMMITTEE MEMBER: Stephanie Teaford, Community Liaison, STRIDE

COMMITTEE MEMBER: Paul Wack, AICP, Professor Emeritus, Cal Poly

ABSTRACT

Hungry No More: A Food System Study & Hunger-Free Community Plan for San Luis Obispo County

Jenny Cadigan

This project examines food systems and hunger in relation to city planning, and results in a draft strategic plan to address the food security and nutritional needs of San Luis Obispo County's most vulnerable residents. This Draft Plan is submitted to the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County as part of the Hunger-Free Community Project.

The Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County was the lead agency of a USDA Hunger-Free Communities planning grant awarded in 2011. With this grant, the Food Bank convened a group of stakeholders to form the San Luis Obispo County Food System Coalition, and worked with community partners to conduct three studies on existing food resources, food security, and nutritional need in San Luis Obispo County. The outcome of this project is a draft of the third component of the grant – the creation of a strategic plan to address hunger and improve nutrition in San Luis Obispo County.

San Luis Obispo County is a rural region rich in agricultural production, but hunger is a growing problem in the County indicating deficiencies in the local food system. One in six residents do not know where their next meal will come from. A high cost of living coupled with many low-wage jobs leaves many residents with few financial resources from which to provide food and other basic necessities.

This project reviewed current professional and academic literature on food systems, hunger, and planning; conducted a case study analysis on existing hunger plans; compiled a background report on the existing hunger situation and community needs in the County; and worked with the San Luis Obispo County Food System Coalition to create the Draft Hunger-Free Community Plan for San Luis Obispo County. The Draft Plan and Background Report are organized into five themes: Food Access, Nutrition & Hunger, Local Agriculture, Community Resources and the SLO County Food System Coalition. As this plan is only a draft, the next steps that need to be taken before final adoption of the plan are outlined. This plan is a community plan; it will require the work and support of many organizations and agencies to effectively end hunger in the County.

Key Words: food access, food security, food system, hunger, nutrition

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my committee chair, Kelly Main, for her continued support and guidance on this project. Thank you for your continual optimism and faith in me. Without you, this project would not have happened.

I would like to thank Joel Diringer for allowing me to assist the Food Bank with the creation of this plan, and Stephanie Teafora for introducing me to this project. Being involved with the SLO County Food System Coalition throughout the duration of this project has been a great experience.

Thank you Paul Wack for being my cheerleader.

A big thanks to The Hunger-Free Communities Grant Steering Committee for your valuable input and dedication:

Becca Carsel
Janice Fong Wolf
Carl Hansen
Kathleen Karle
Kim Pasciuto
Jenna Smith
Stephanie Teafora

I want to thank the rest of the SLO County Food System Coalition, particularly those who participated in the Hunger-Free Community Plan brainstorming session.

Additional thanks to:

Yumie Dahn for your technical assistance
Patty Whitney-Wise for taking the time to share about your experience with creating and implementing hunger plans
and Chris Clark.

And thank you to my family for your love and encouragement,

and to Bill Watt for your daily support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	2
RELEVANCE TO PLANNING.....	3
CONTEXT.....	5
THE PLAN.....	6
SUPPORTING MATERIALS	7
NEXT STEPS	11
THE DRAFT PLAN.....	12
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	14
TABLE OF CONTENTS	15
PLAN SUMMARY.....	16
INTRODUCTION.....	18
FOOD ACCESS.....	22
NUTRITION & HUNGER	28
LOCAL AGRICULTURE.....	36
COMMUNITY RESOURCES.....	43
SLO COUNTY FOOD SYSTEM COALITION	49
INDICATORS FOR SUCCESS.....	54
GLOSSARY.....	64
REFERENCES.....	67
DECLARATION OF SUPPORT.....	71
APPENDICES.....	73
METHODOLOGY	74
PHASE ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW	75
PHASE TWO: CASE STUDY ANALYSIS + BACKGROUND REPORT	76
PHASE THREE: RECOMMENDATIONS	79
LITERATURE REVIEW	81
FOOD SYSTEMS	82
FOOD SECURITY & HUNGER	89
NUTRITION.....	93
FOOD ACCESS	96
BACKGROUND REPORT	100
INTRODUCTION	101
COUNTY PROFILE	102
LOCAL POLICY AND GOVERNMENT	105
VULNERABLE POPULATIONS	108
FOOD ACCESS	112
HUNGER & NUTRITION.....	122
LOCAL AGRICULTURE.....	129
COMMUNITY RESOURCES.....	135
SLO COUNTY FOOD SYSTEM COALITION	142
CHALLENGES	145

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS.....	147
A STUDY OF TEN EXISTING HUNGER PLANS	148
INTERVIEW.....	154
REFERENCES.....	159
HUNGRY NO MORE: A HUNGER-FREE COMMUNITY PLAN FOR SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY	165

LIST OF TABLES & FIGURES

TABLES

Table 1 - Case Study & Background Report: Questions & Sources	78
Table 2 - General San Luis Obispo County Statistics (2010)	104
Table 3 - Diet Related Health Statistics (2008-2010)	125
Table 4 - Case Studies: Matrix	149
Table 5 - Case Studies: Summary of Goals	151

FIGURES

Figure 1 - San Luis Obispo County Boundaries	103
Figure 2 - Age of Participants in STRIDE's Surveyed Population	109
Figure 3 - Median Income of Participants in STRIDE's Surveyed Population	112
Figure 4 - Non-Assistance CalFresh Case Trends in San Luis Obispo County	116
Figure 5 - Food Assistance Awareness Among STRIDE's Surveyed Population	117
Figure 6 - Food Assistance Utilization Among STRIDE's Surveyed Population	117
Figure 7 - Food Assistance Utilization Among STRIDE's Surveyed Population Living in Poverty	118
Figure 8 - School Breakfast Program in San Luis Obispo County	120
Figure 9 - National School Lunch Program in San Luis Obispo County	120
Figure 10 - Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Among STRIDE's Surveyed Population	126
Figure 11 - Soda and Snack Consumption Among STRIDE's Surveyed Population ...	126
Figure 12 - Jobs by Earnings: San Luis Obispo County	136
Figure 13 - Jobs by Earnings: State of California.....	136
Figure 14 - Self Sufficiency Standard for San Luis Obispo County (2011)	139

1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County (Food Bank) was the lead agency on a *Hunger-Free Communities* (HFC) planning grant awarded by the USDA in spring 2011. With this grant, the Food Bank and its community partners have worked to 1) conduct three assessments to examine food resources, food insecurity and nutritional need in San Luis Obispo (SLO) County, 2) convene a broad range of local stakeholders to form a food policy council, *SLO County Food System Coalition*, and 3) develop a Hunger-Free Community Plan. The plan will position the community to comprehensively address the food security and nutritional needs of San Luis Obispo County's most vulnerable residents. This project, a Professional Project completed as part of the requirements of the Master of City and Regional Planning program at California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), reviews existing literature on food systems and hunger, examines current conditions of San Luis Obispo County's hunger and nutritional needs, and provides recommendations for addressing these issues, resulting in a Draft Hunger-Free Community Plan.

In addition to the Draft Plan, this project includes all of the supplemental work that was conducted leading up to the plan, which can be found in the appendices. This professional project was developed under the guidance of Dr. Kelly Main, Assistant Professor of City and Regional Planning at Cal Poly and the faculty advisor for this project, and Joel Diringer, the project manager of the Hunger-Free Communities grant and the "client" of this project. Stephanie Teafor, Community Liason for STRIDE and a member of the Hunger-Free Communities Grant Steering Committee, and Paul Wack,

Professor Emeritus of City and Regional Planning at Cal Poly also served as committee members of this project. In addition, the Hunger-Free Communities Grant Steering Committee (committee overseeing grant activities) and the SLO County Food System Coalition were involved with the creation of this plan.

RELEVANCE TO PLANNING

Food is part of a complex system; to examine issues of hunger and nutrition, the food system will be examined holistically. Academics have described the food system by the network of processes, institutions, infrastructure, actors and resources that enable the production, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food (Raja and Wooten, 2010). The SLO County Food System Coalition (2012) has defined the local food system to be the “food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management as well as associated supporting and regulatory institutions and activities in San Luis Obispo County.” Thus, while focused on alleviating hunger, this project examines the County’s food system holistically. Strategies that will help create a more sustainable local food system that is equitable, profitable, resilient, and health promoting, will in turn help to reduce hunger and promote nutrition among San Luis Obispo County residents.

There are many players in the food system, and efforts to improve the local food system will involve a variety of stakeholders from agriculture, public health, education, and social service sectors. In addition, planners can play a role in shaping the local food system. As Raja and Wooten (2010) explain:

Planners have the capacity and training to think systematically about the food system, to engage community members in envisioning and planning a desirable food system, to assess the bottlenecks and opportunities within a community food system and identify policies and strategies to strengthen and rebuild a food system. (p. 1)

Though not traditionally a focus among planners, food systems have received increased recognition from the planning profession in the past decade. The American Planning Association (APA) adopted a Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning in 2007. This policy guide outlines several converging factors that explain the heightened awareness of food systems among planners. Among these factors include:

- Recognition that food system activities take up a significant amount of urban and regional land
- Awareness that planners can play a role to help reduce the rising incidence of hunger on the one hand, and obesity on the other
- Understanding that the food system represents an important part of community and regional economies
- Awareness that access to healthy foods in low-income areas is an increasing problem for which urban agriculture can offer an important solution
- Recognition that many benefits emerge from stronger community and regional food systems (American Planning Association, 2007)

The Policy Guide asserts that current planning activities conducted by land use planners, economic development planners, transportation planners and environmental planners already affect the food system, but APA calls for stronger connections between traditional planning and the emerging field of community and regional food planning.

The field of food systems planning is new, but is gaining momentum as it becomes central to the planning field. With the rise of the nation's obesity epidemic, awareness of climate change, and a population that continues to grow, food system issues are becoming more pertinent to planners. The research and exercises completed as part of this project were conducted through a planning lens. This fact contributes to the uniqueness of the San Luis Obispo Hunger-Free Communities Plan. In addition utilizing a systematic planning approach and planning tools to address the issue of hunger in San Luis Obispo County contributes to the growing knowledge of food system planning.

CONTEXT

Food is what nourishes and sustains us, yet many households struggle to put food on the table. About 40,000 residents of San Luis Obispo County either go hungry on a regular basis or sometimes do not know when or where they will get their next meal (Food Bank, 2012). While the Central Coast of California is often viewed as an affluent and healthy place, almost half (49%) of adults are overweight or obese, and almost as many (48%) do not eat the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables (California Health Interview Survey [CHIS], 2007).

With the current recession, hunger has been an increasing problem. A growing number of people are finding themselves hungry for the first time in their lives. The Food Bank has seen a 40% increase in the number of people using their services in the past two years, and a 90% increase in the past five years. Children are disproportionately affected; while children constitute only about 19% of the County's population, they make up about 40% of the Food Bank's clients (Food Bank, 2012). Seniors and Hispanics are

also disproportionately affected. In addition, food assistance programs such as CalFresh and WIC are underutilized. Research shows that a large percentage of people that likely qualify for such programs in San Luis Obispo County, including individuals and families living in poverty, are not utilizing these resources (STRIDE, 2012). Hispanic participation in these programs is especially low. These examples illustrate just some of the reasons a strategic plan to address hunger and nutrition in San Luis Obispo County is needed.

THE PLAN

The Draft Plan is divided into five key themes: Food Access, Nutrition and Hunger, Local Agriculture, Community Resources, and the SLO County Food System Coalition. A case study review of existing hunger plans played a role in both the organization and content of this plan. This analysis also revealed that many of the existing plans focus only on emergency food and federal food assistance programs to alleviate hunger. However, this plan takes a more holistic approach, and while not overlooking the value of food assistance, has incorporated strategies that aim to address the root causes of hunger. It goes beyond looking at the quantity of food, and realizes that the nutritional content of food is also a critical component. Further, it is recognized that no single agency or organization alone can end hunger. It will need to be a community effort. As a community plan, strategies target different layers of the community, including the individual and family, organizations and institutions, and public policy. Advocacy, education, and collaboration with other organizations all play a role within the recommendations. This plan includes five overarching goals, one for each section of the plan, and a series of objectives, and measurable strategies. This plan aims to be feasible and measurable; strategies are designated as short, medium or long term, and

each strategy includes a lead agency(s) and indicators to measure the success of the strategy over time.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Supporting research for The Hunger-Free Community Plan is included in appendices.

The primary support materials are found in Appendix A, B, C and D, titled Methodology, Literature Review, Background Report and Case Studies, respectively. Appendix E is the designed version of the Draft Plan.

Appendix A: Methodology

This project was conducted in three main phases. Phase one consisted of a literature review on hunger, food systems and how food systems relate to planning. This provided a solid understanding of the subject to inform phases two and three. Phase two contained a case study analysis and an in-depth background report, which were conducted in tandem with one another. In phase three, information gathered in phase two was used to create a set of recommendations, resulting in the Draft Hunger-Free Community Plan.

Developing the plan was an iterative and collaborative process. A key component throughout the planning process was the involvement of community stakeholders. This group of stakeholders largely consisted of those in the SLO County Food System Coalition. In April 2012, a brainstorming session was conducted with the Food System Coalition. Many ideas generated from this session are incorporated into the strategies found in the Plan.

Appendix B: Literature Review

The Literature Review examines academic literature, news articles, professional studies and reports, and best practices from the field. Information on food systems, hunger and nutrition is covered. The Literature Review focuses on the relationship between planning and food systems, and how planners can help increase access to healthy food.

Additionally, *Food system* is defined, *the* difference between hunger and food insecurity is discussed, and the relationship between obesity and hunger is identified. The Literature Review provides a solid understanding of the topic, which helped inform the Background Report and the Plan. Specifically, it reiterated the idea that food is part of a complex and interrelated system; and that to address hunger, the whole food system must be taken into consideration.

Appendix C: Background Report

The Background Report provides detailed information about hunger and nutrition issues in San Luis Obispo County. The Background Report opens with an introduction, a county profile, an outline of existing government policy pertaining to the food system and information regarding the populations vulnerable to food insecurity. It is then organized in the same manner as the Draft Plan: Food Access, Nutrition and Hunger, Local Agriculture, Community Resources and the SLO County Food System Coalition. Key information from the Background Report was extracted and used in the narrative sections of the Plan. The three assessments conducted as part of the Hunger-Free Communities grant (the Food Resource Guide created by Central Coast Ag Network [CCAN], and the Food Security Assessment and Food Store Survey conducted by STRIDE) were key sources for the Background Report. Additional data was retrieved

from the U.S. Census, and a multitude of County and State agencies. Key takeaways from the background research that influenced the Plan include:

- More than half of families (52% overall; 62% of Hispanic households) participating in the Food Security Assessment reported having to choose between paying for food and housing. Families with children were more likely to face this dilemma.
- Nutrition assistance programs (e.g. CalFresh) appear to be underutilized by low-income respondents, particularly among middle-aged individuals.
- Nearly half of poor respondents who were not on CalFresh thought they were not eligible, and a quarter of those not using the Food Bank thought they were not eligible.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables were harder to find in food stores than were snacks and soda, and healthier foods were more expensive than unhealthy alternatives.
- In the past two years, the Food Bank has seen an increase of 40% in the number of people utilizing their resources, and a 90% increase in the past five years.
- While San Luis Obispo has a reputation for being a healthy community, 49% of adults in the County are overweight or obese (California Health Interview Survey, 2007), and almost as many (48%) do not eat the recommended five servings of fruit or vegetables a day (Food Bank, 2012).
- San Luis Obispo County produces enough food to feed every resident of the County 7.5 pounds of food a day; yet, over 44,000 people are food insecure.
- Children are disproportionately affected; they constitute nearly 40% of Food Bank clients, but only 19% of the County's population.

Appendix D: Case Study Analysis

A case study analysis was conducted in two parts. This first part entailed reviewing ten existing hunger plans that have been created around the nation. A matrix was created that outlined the organization of these plans. This helped provide a general understanding of how a hunger plan may look. Additionally, the goals from all ten plans were studied, which offered a greater awareness on the content of hunger plans.

From this initial analysis, two of the plans were selected for further study. The two plans created for the State of Oregon stood out for several reasons: 1) The creators had gone through the planning phase twice and may have more insight to offer; 2) One of the plans has been implemented; 3) both plans recognize that hunger is an economic issue; 4) the plans are organized thematically. A phone interview was conducted with one of the authors of the two Oregon plans, which provided valuable information about the planning and implementation process. This appendix includes the matrix and summary of goals, and a discussion on the information obtained from the interview.

Appendix E: Hungry No More: A Hunger Free Community Plan for San Luis

Obispo County

Appendix F is the designed, color version of the Plan. This is the version submitted to the client, and recommended for the final plan. The content of this plan is the same as that which is presented in the main section of this document, but is presented and formatted in a manner more suitable for a community plan.

NEXT STEPS

This project culminates with a Draft Hunger-Free Community Plan for San Luis Obispo County. The grant period ends in September 2012. Before this plan is considered complete a few additional steps need to be taken:

- 1) Present the Draft Plan to the Food System Coalition for final amendments.
- 2) Obtain agreement from all proposed lead agencies that they are both willing and have the capacity to carry out the strategies as recommended. Adjust time period if needed. Strategies that do not have a willing lead agency may need to be eliminated from the plan.
- 3) Review indicators and ensure that regular measurements of the indicators will be feasible. Additionally, existing measurements of indicators will need to be gathered to be baseline measurements. Strategies that cannot be regularly measured may need to be eliminated.
- 4) Have the Food System Coalition officially adopt the Plan.
- 5) Disseminate the Plan to other organizations, agencies and individuals for endorsement to build community support around the plan. A Declaration of Support has been created and is included on the back page of the Plan.
- 6) Present the Plan to the County Health Commission. The Health Commission can endorse the Plan and then make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve the Plan by resolution.

2

THE DRAFT PLAN

**Hungry No More:
A Hunger-Free Community Plan
for San Luis Obispo County**

DRAFT

Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County
•
SLO County Food System Coalition
June 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan is a project of the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County, with support from the SLO County Food System Coalition. A USDA Hunger-Free Communities Grant, awarded to the Food Bank, provided funding for this project.

The plan was created by Jenny Cadigan under the direction of Professor Kelly Main in partial fulfillment of a Master of City and Regional Planning degree at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. Her committee was chaired by Professor Kelly Main, and also included Joel Diringer, the project manager of the Hunger-Free Communities Grant, Stephanie Teafor, a member of the Hunger-Free Communities Grant Steering Committee, and Paul Wack, Professor Emeritus of City and Regional Planning and Cal Poly. Additional input was provided from the Hunger-Free Communities Grant Steering Committee, the SLO County Food System Coalition, and other community organizations.

Thank you to all those involved in the project and planning process:

The Hunger-Free Communities Grant Steering Committee

Becca Carsel
Carl Hansen
Janice Fong Wolf
Kathleen Karle
Kim Pasciuto
Jenna Smith
Stephanie Teafor

Partner Agencies:

Cal Poly Center for Sustainability
CAPSLO
Central Coast Ag Network
ECO SLO
First 5 of San Luis Obispo County
HEAL SLO
Pismo Oceano Vegetable Exchange
Sierra Club
SLO County Community Foundation
SLO County Department of Planning & Building
SLO County Department of Social Services
SLO County Farm Bureau
SLO County Office of Education
SLO County Public Health Department
SLO VEG
STRIDE
UC Cooperative Extension
United Way of San Luis Obispo County

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Plan Summary	16
Introduction	18
Hunger-Free Community Project... ..	18
County Profile	18
The Hunger Situation	19
Economics	20
Vulnerable Populations	20
About the Plan	21
 RECOMMENDATIONS	
Food Access	22
The Issue	22
San Luis Obispo County Needs	23
Goal, Objectives & Strategies	26
Nutrition & Hunger	28
The Issue	28
San Luis Obispo County Needs	29
Goal, Objectives & Strategies	33
Local Agriculture	36
The Issue	36
San Luis Obispo County Needs	37
Goal, Objectives & Strategies	41
Community Resources	43
The Issue	43
San Luis Obispo County Needs	44
Goal, Objectives & Strategies	47
San Luis Obispo County Food System Coalition	49
The Issue	49
San Luis Obispo County Needs	50
Goal, Objectives & Strategies	52
Indicators for Success	54
Glossary	64
References	67
Declaration of Support	71

PLAN SUMMARY

Below is a summary of all of the goals and objectives included in the Hunger-Free Community Plan. It does not include the specific strategies. There are five goals and twenty objectives.

1. Food Access

Goal: All San Luis Obispo County residents have access to nutritious food.

- A. Increase the availability of healthy and nutritious food from the Food Bank and other community food resources.
- B. Raise awareness and increase utilization of food and nutrition assistance programs particularly among the most underserved populations.
- C. Increase participation in pre-school, school, after school and summer feeding programs that provide nutritious food.
- D. Develop sources of sustainable funding for food assistance programs.

2. Nutrition & Hunger

Goal: Improved nutrition of San Luis Obispo County residents who experience food insecurity.

- A. Increase availability of nutritious food in local communities.
- B. Encourage community institutions to prioritize healthy and local food.
- C. Make resources available to health providers to both educate patients about proper nutrition and provide appropriate referrals to food assistance.
- D. Increase education and awareness on maintaining a healthy diet.
- E. Increase access to retail outlets that provide fresh produce and nutritious food.

3. Local Agriculture

Goal: A sustainable local food system that is able to meet the food needs of San Luis Obispo County residents.

- A. Increase opportunities for local food processing, distribution, marketing and sales.
- B. Enhance gleaning efforts.
- C. Promote agriculture as an economic development tool.
- D. Protect and enhance food production resources (e.g. land, water, air quality) and raise public awareness of threats to productivity.

4. Community Resources

Goal: Collaborative community efforts to address the root causes of hunger in San Luis Obispo County.

- A. Make ending hunger a community priority in the County.
- B. Increase use of existing programs and services that can help families meet financial, health and social needs.
- C. Expand access to low-cost healthcare and pharmaceuticals to reduce a family's dilemma of paying for food or medicine.
- D. Increase the number of head-of-household jobs, and availability and affordability of housing and transportation through partnering with existing county efforts.

5. SLO County Food System Coalition

Goal: A vibrant SLO County Food System Coalition and effective Hunger-Free Community Plan.

- A. Strengthen the SLO County Food System Coalition by having an engaged and effective membership and maintaining alliances with local, state and national organizations.
- B. Establish a Food System Coalition Advocacy Committee to engage in advocacy and community education around local, state and national issues.
- C. Review the Hunger-Free Community Plan on an annual basis.

INTRODUCTION

Hunger-Free Community Project

The Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County was the lead agency of a USDA Hunger-Free Communities planning grant awarded in spring 2011. With this grant, the Food Bank has 1) convened a group of stakeholders to form a food policy council, the *SLO County Food System Coalition*, and 2) worked with community partners to conduct three studies; The Central Coast Ag Network (CCAN) produced a Food Resource Guide, and STRIDE, a Cal Poly research group, conducted a Food Security Assessment and Food Store Survey. Both the Food System Coalition and the studies have contributed to the third component of the grant, the creation of this strategic plan to address hunger and nutrition issues in San Luis Obispo (SLO) County.

County Profile

San Luis Obispo County is a rural county located on the Central Coast of California, about midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. San Luis Obispo is bordered by Monterey County to the north, Kern County to the east, Santa Barbara County to the south and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The County encompasses about 3,600 square miles of land and is home to almost 270,000 people (U.S. Census, 2010, DP-1). There are seven incorporated cities within the County and many unincorporated communities.

Approximately 83% of the population is white, and 21% are Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census, 2010, DP-1). In 2008, 83% of the population five years and older spoke English only at home, and 14% spoke Spanish only at home (Applied Survey Research, 2010). About 78% of family households are married-couple families, and the average family size is three persons (Applied Survey Research, 2010).

Tourism and agriculture are among the largest economic sectors in San Luis Obispo County. Employment data from the first quarter of 2012 reveals the rate has dropped to 8.7% (CA Employment Development Department, 2012). The median household income is about \$54,000, less than the California median household income of \$58,000 (U.S. Census, 2010, S2401). The number of households living in poverty increased 20% between 2003 and 2009 (Applied Survey Research, 2010).

The Hunger Situation

While the Central Coast of California is often viewed as an affluent and healthy place, 40,000 residents struggled to provide food for themselves in 2011. Almost half (49%) of adults are overweight or obese, and almost as many (48%) do not eat the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables (California Health Interview Survey [CHIS], 2007). With the recent recession, hunger has been an increasing problem. A growing number of people are finding themselves hungry for the first time in their lives. The number of people using Food Bank services has increased 40% in the past two years, and 90% in the past five years.

Children are disproportionately affected. While children constitute only about 19% of the County's population, they make up about 40% of the Food Bank's clients (Food Bank, 2012). Sufficient food and adequate nutrition are important for optimal child growth and development. Seniors and Hispanics are also disproportionately affected.

Food assistance programs such as CalFresh and WIC are underutilized. STRIDE's research shows that a large percentage of people that likely qualify for such programs,

including individuals and families living in poverty, are not utilizing these resources. Hispanic participation in these programs is especially low.

Economics

Hunger is largely a factor of income. A correlation exists between those living in poverty and those facing food insecurity. With an economy driven by agriculture and tourism, many of the jobs in the County pay low wages. Furthermore, San Luis Obispo County has one of the most unaffordable housing markets in the nation (National Association of Home Builders, 2011). High housing costs leave residents with fewer financial resources to provide themselves (and any dependents) with other necessities such as transportation, healthcare, and food. Many families are faced with choosing between buying food and paying their rent/mortgage, medical expenses, or securing other essential resources.

Vulnerable Populations

The objective of the STRIDE Food Security Assessment was to characterize the factors associated with food insecurity among vulnerable populations in San Luis Obispo County and to gain a better understanding of hunger in the County (STRIDE, 2012). The survey was administered to over 800 community members in 54 different locations in October and November 2011. Twenty-two agencies were consulted to approximate characteristics and numbers of the County's vulnerable populations. From these consultations, "vulnerable populations" were defined as the unemployed and underemployed, families living in poverty, senior citizens, the working poor and other similar groups (STRIDE, 2012). The survey targeted these vulnerable populations, 75%

of who were found to be food insecure. Findings from this survey helped shape the recommendations contained in the Plan.

About the Plan

The Hunger-Free Community Plan aims to comprehensively address the food security and nutritional needs of San Luis Obispo County's most vulnerable residents. Upon completion, this plan will be adopted by the Food System Coalition, and endorsed by many community agencies and organizations. Federal, state, and local resources will be utilized to aid in hunger relief. This is a community plan, and to effectively end hunger, it will require the work and participation of the whole community including individuals, non-profits and institutions such as schools and hospitals, along with policy changes at the government level. It will take more than food assistance programs to end hunger. The root causes of hunger must be addressed. This plan aims to build and strengthen partnerships across the community to most effectively eradicate hunger, and work towards building a more sustainable food system.

In addition to the three assessments conducted as part of the grant, data was collected from the U.S. Census, County and State agencies, the 2010 ACTION for Healthy Communities report, the California Health Interview Survey and other local, state and national organizations. The plan is organized into five sections: Food Access, Nutrition and Hunger, Local Agriculture, Community Resources, and the SLO County Food System Coalition. Each of the five areas has one goal, each goal has three to five objectives, and each objective is accompanied by a set of measurable strategies. The five sections of the plan all begin with a brief overview of the issue, and a summary of SLO County needs before providing the goal, objectives and strategies pertaining to that

area. At the end of the plan is a spreadsheet containing all of the goals, objectives and strategies, with indicators, a lead agency and an estimated time frame for each strategy (short, medium or long term).

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOOD ACCESS

“Food access is about social justice, and it’s about economic vitality.... Equitable food access is a corner stone for healthy communities—communities in which everyone has opportunities to participate, work, prosper, and enjoy healthy, productive lives” (Bell & Standish, 2009).

The Issue

Issues of hunger and poor nutrition have been clearly linked to limited access to fresh, affordable food (Hatfield & Gunnell, 2005). Barriers to healthy food access can be both physical and financial. Physical barriers point to poor land use and transportation decisions, and financial barriers point to economic problems. Inequitable access leads to health disparities in many communities, both urban and rural. Ironically, residents of rural communities, where agricultural production can be bountiful, are often at higher risk of hunger. Food Bank distributions, federal nutrition assistance programs and schools all play a role in food access for low-income residents. However, in order for these programs to continue, funding must be in place.

San Luis Obispo County Needs

Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County

The Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County works to alleviate hunger countywide by providing food to those in need. The Food Bank provides nutritious food directly to the public and to its many partner organizations that also distribute food. In addition, the Food Bank administers several food distribution programs. The food distributed by the Food Bank comes from a variety of sources, including businesses, individuals, farmers, supermarkets, food manufacturers, and packing houses. Nutrition is a top priority for the Food Bank; almost half of the food distributed is fresh produce.

The level of need in San Luis Obispo County has grown tremendously in the past five years. The Food Bank served 44,000 people in 2011, a 90% increase from 2006 (Food Bank, 2012). Children are disproportionately affected; children and seniors constitute about half of the population served by the Food Bank. Further, a large percentage of Food Bank clients are Hispanic. The quantity of fresh food available for the Food Bank to distribute could be increased if incentives were provided to farmers to provide more produce. For example, farmers could sell produce unsold through conventional market outlets at a reduced rate before it spoils. Additionally, partnerships with local grocers could be expanded to obtain a greater volume of unsold food from grocery stores, and the hours distribution sites are open could be extended.

Nutrition Assistance Programs

Many residents rely on nutrition assistance programs, such as CalFresh and WIC, to help them purchase food. The Federal Food Stamp Program has been renamed SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. In California, this federal program is

administered under the name of CalFresh. CalFresh helps low-income people buy food via a debit card that can only be used to purchase food items, or plants and seeds to grow food. Healthcare Childcare

The County has seen an upward trend in CalFresh cases. CalFresh data is broken down into Non-Assistance CalFresh (NACF) cases, meaning those who receive only CalFresh benefits, and Public Assistance CalFresh (PACF) cases, referring to those who receive cash assistance in addition to CalFresh. In a three-year period between the 2007-2008 Fiscal Year and the 2010-2011 Fiscal Year, NACF cases have more than doubled, and PACF cases have increased 25% (SLO County Department of Social Services, 2012).

California Food Policy Advocates report that 32,750 SLO County residents are eligible for CalFresh based on their income, but that only 9,593 of these individuals are participating in the program. This ranks SLO County 53rd out of 58 counties (with 1 having the highest participation rate of eligible individuals and 58 having the lowest).

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, more commonly known as WIC, is designed to help pregnant women, new mothers, and young children (up to five years of age) eat well and stay healthy. Data released in 2010 indicate approximately 4,630 County residents are participating in the WIC program (California Food Policy Advocates, 2010).

The STRIDE Food Security Assessment confirms that there is high awareness of food assistance programs. When survey participants were asked if they had heard of the

Food Bank, CalFresh, and WIC, “yes” responses were 89%, 84% and 79% respectively. However, program use is low. Of those who had heard of these programs, 82%, 57% and 59% of the participants were currently, or had in the past utilized the Food Bank, CalFresh and WIC, respectively. This data supports a strong need for education, outreach, and assistance with these programs. Many survey participants reported that they did not utilize food assistance programs because they believed they did not qualify, or were unsure if they qualified. The STRIDE data shows that overall, Hispanic participants were least likely to utilize any assistance programs.

Schools

About one third of San Luis Obispo County school children were consistently enrolled in the Free and Reduced Price Meal Program between 2002 and 2009. However, there was a 9% increase in enrollment between the 2008-2009 and the 2009-2010 school years. To date, about 43% (14,700) of San Luis Obispo’s school children receive free or reduced priced meals (CA State Department of Education, 2012a). In the summer months when school is out of session, many children are still in need of meal assistance. In the summer of 2011, there were seven sites in the County that provided children with free nutritious breakfast, lunch, and or afternoon snacks (CA State Department of Education, 2012b).

Funding

Operating food assistance programs requires money. Finding sustainable funding sources to keep these programs running in the County will be vital. Direct cash donations through automated systems such as online banking or grocery store checkout

lines could help secure funds. In addition, the Food Bank should continue to pursue grant funding from foundations and other granting organizations.

Goal, Objectives & Strategies

Goal: All San Luis Obispo County residents have access to nutritious food.

- A. Increase the availability of healthy and nutritious food from the Food Bank and other community food resources.
 - 1. Provide incentives to local farmers to provide produce to Food Bank.
 - 2. Expand weekend and evening hours of food distribution sites.
 - 3. Improve refrigeration and storage systems in food distribution sites to increase ability to distribute perishable foods.
 - 4. Maintain and support partnerships with local grocers for the donation of surplus food.
- B. Raise awareness and increase utilization of food and nutrition assistance programs particularly among the most underserved populations.
 - 1. Expand outreach and enrollment efforts for CalFresh benefits through Department of Social Services and community partners such as family resource centers.
 - 2. Identify barriers to CalFresh enrollment at the county level and advocate with the County to improve outreach and simplify the application process.
 - 3. Increase outreach to the Hispanic population to increase their participation in CalFresh and WIC programs.
 - 4. Expand outreach and education efforts on fresh food distributions including education on how to prepare produce in a healthy way.

- C. Increase participation in pre-school, school, after school and summer feeding programs that provide nutritious food.
1. Collaborate with school districts and nonprofit partners to increase the number of feeding programs available locally for school aged children during the school term and during vacation periods.
 2. Identify school districts with low utilization of school breakfast programs and encourage their expansion.
 3. Increase utilization of feeding programs such as the Child and Adult Care Food Program at family day care homes and childcare centers.
- D. Develop sources of sustainable funding for food assistance programs.
1. Pursue direct cash donations via grocery store checkout lines and online banking systems.
 2. Promote annual donations and the Feed the Hunger Endowment at the SLO County Community Foundation.
 3. Collaborate with community partners to conduct more efficient fundraising drives to provide nutritious food with minimal cost.
 4. Continue to seek grant funding from foundations, local, state and federal governments, and community service organizations to support Food Bank infrastructure and products for distribution.
 5. Collaborate with coalitions such as Partnership for Excellence in Family Support to synchronize resources and leverage funding opportunities.

NUTRITION & HUNGER

“Without affordable fresh food options, especially fruit and vegetables, adults and children face fundamental challenges to making the healthy food choices that are essential for nutritious, balanced, diets” (Bell & Standish, 2009, p. 75).

The Issue

One’s food choices have a great effect on overall health. Residents with limited financial resources often have a higher intake of unhealthy food; high caloric food is often cheaper and can stretch farther than nutritious food (i.e. a families food dollar can buy more calories of unhealthy food than of nutritious food). Thus, it is not uncommon for those who face hunger to also be overweight or obese (Food Research and Action Center, 2010). One’s diet can also influence their risk of other health conditions and diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, some cancers (primarily colon and breast cancer), osteoporosis, and hypertension diseases (National Cancer Institute, n.d). Unhealthy eating habits are a primary risk factor for five of the top ten causes of death in California (Public Health Law and Policy & Raimi and Associates, 2008). Residents living in neighborhoods underserved by grocery stores or dominated by convenience stores and fast food outlets may find it more difficult to obtain healthy meals, especially if they do not, or cannot drive.

A large component of a healthy diet is eating enough fruits and vegetables. A high intake of fruits and vegetables is important for optimal child growth, weight management, and chronic disease prevention. Eating five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables a day as part of a healthy, active lifestyle reduces the risk of diet related diseases (National Cancer Institute, n.d). Reaching the goal of increased nutrition will require making

nutritious choices more available, as well as increasing education on the benefits of healthy eating.

San Luis Obispo County Needs

Diet & Diet Related Disease

The California Health Interview Survey indicates that nearly half of San Luis Obispo County residents do not eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, and the 2010 ACTION study found that only one-third of San Luis Obispo County teens self reported getting the daily recommendation of five or more fruits and vegetables. In 2007, almost half (49%) of adults in San Luis Obispo were overweight or obese (CHIS, 2007). In 2008, about 40% of children 5 to 19 years old were at risk of becoming overweight or were already overweight, putting them at greater risk to becoming obese later in life (Applied Survey Research, 2010).

Participants in STRIDE's Food Security Assessment were asked to report on their consumption habits. Emphasis was placed on fruits and vegetables, and soda and snacks. On average, participants consumed fruits and vegetables (including fresh, frozen, and canned) twice a day. About 34% of participants reported eating fruits and vegetables less than once per day, and another 11% ate fruits and vegetables 1-2 times a day. Only 6% reported eating fruits and vegetables more than 5 times per day (STRIDE, 2012).

Participants reported consuming snacks and soda less frequently than fruits and vegetables. On average, participants consumed snacks and soda 1.7 times per day. While 12% reported never consuming snacks and soda, 33% reported consuming these

items less than once per day, 31% consumed these items 1-2 times a day, and 24% reported consuming snacks and soda at least three times per day (STRIDE, 2012).

Availability of Healthy Food

In general, people are not consuming enough fruits and vegetables. To increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, these foods need to become more available to greater populations. Eating healthy needs to be an option for all residents. Healthy food can be obtained from a variety of sources, but some barriers do exist.

Shopping at farmers markets is a great way to get fresh flavor packed produce and support local growers. There are twenty-one farmers markets operating in the County, however, none of them are equipped with EBT machines to accept CalFresh benefits. This may prevent low-income residents from being able to take advantage of purchasing fresh food from local farmers markets.

Community gardens provide residents who may not otherwise have the space an opportunity to grow their own produce. There are sixteen community gardens in the County, but many of them have waiting lists. Community gardens are relatively inexpensive to start, and can be a great use of underutilized land, whether temporary or permanent. Food can be also be produced onsite at workplaces through small barrel gardens, located on school grounds (school gardens), incorporated into affordable housing projects, and in residents' backyards.

Institutional Purchasing

In addition to encouraging healthy nutrition at the individual level, healthy local food should be promoted at the institutional level. Schools, hospitals and jails all purchase great quantities of food for residents. Teachers, physicians, non-profit organizations and government officials are positioned to promote the importance of a healthy diet.

HEAL-SLO, a coalition focused on increasing healthful eating and physical activity, is advocating for the Board of Supervisors to adopt a “buy local” policy for the County.

While the County primarily only purchases food for the County jail and Juvenile Hall, this policy is symbolic of the County’s commitment to supporting the local economy by investing in local agriculture, and provides leadership in the buy local movement.

Further, a buy local policy improves the traceability of food, promotes healthy eating, and reduces carbon emissions. Each city in the County should consider adopting a “buy local” policy to support local growers and promote fresh foods.

Every school district participating in the National School Lunch Program or other child nutrition program is required by federal law to enact a school wellness policy for all schools under its jurisdiction (Center for Disease Control, 2012). As a result of this federal policy, local schools have developed initiatives to promote healthful nutrition and physical activity. The Wellness Policies of San Luis Obispo County school districts offer an opportunity to implement programs and policies to more aggressively integrate healthy eating and nutrition education into the lives of youth.

Nutrition Education and Outreach

There are several nutrition education efforts already in place. The San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services and the Public Health Department received a USDA SNAP-ED grant to increase nutrition education services. This grant will allow both agencies to collaboratively educate CalFresh participants to make healthier choices with their limited budget. Additionally, the University of California Cooperative Extension has a CalFresh Nutrition Education Program. The program provides evidenced-based nutrition education to CalFresh recipients and other low-income individuals and families in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties (UC Cooperative Education, 2012). The program also specializes in creating healthy cultures in low-income schools. Efforts should be made to expand or mimic these efforts to reach a greater audience.

Healthy Food Retail

There is growing awareness of the relationship between public health and the built environment. Land use, transportation and economic development decisions can be instrumental in public health outcomes. Specifically, they can shape neighborhood food access and the retail food environment. Low-income neighborhoods often suffer from disproportionately lower access to retail outlets that sell fresh produce and higher concentrations of fast food outlets and convenience stores (Public Health Law and Policy & Raimi and Associates, 2008).

The Food Store survey conducted by STRIDE revealed that groceries tend to be more expensive on the coast and less expensive in the north part of the County, that fruits and vegetables were harder to find than snacks and soda, and that healthier varieties (e.g. whole wheat bread, lean meat) were more expensive than less healthy alternatives.

However, healthy food access has not been studied at the neighborhood level in San Luis Obispo County.

Because the County is predominantly rural, there are likely to be underserved areas that lack easy access to fresh nutritious food. Residents in rural areas with limited access to transportation rely heavily on corner stores for their food shopping, which generally sell packaged foods and beverages of little nutritional value, alcohol and tobacco products, with few, if any fresh food items. Creating new farmers markets, encouraging healthy mobile vending, and investing in healthy corner store initiatives are all methods of increasing the availability of healthy food in these underserved areas.

Goal, Objectives & Strategies

Goal: Improved nutrition of San Luis Obispo County residents who experience food insecurity.

- A. Increase availability of nutritious food in local communities.
 - 1. Provide greater opportunities for food insecure populations to shop at farmers markets by enabling the use of CalFresh benefits and WIC vouchers, and expand markets to underserved areas through innovative models such as mobile markets, family resource center and school-based markets and swap meets.
 - 2. Utilize Central Coast Ag Network's inventory of agriculturally viable publicly owned lands to identify locations for community gardens on existing parkland, public easements, rights-of-way and schoolyards, and

support their development with municipalities, schools and community organizations.

3. Create opportunities for onsite food production, such as gardens or green roofs in affordable housing projects, and barrel gardens at workplaces, family resource and childcare centers and places of worship.¹
4. Develop joint use agreements for community kitchens to allow communal food preparation and preservation.
5. Identify regulatory barriers for food producers, processors and distributors that unreasonably restrict the availability of nutritious food for vulnerable populations.

B. Encourage community institutions to prioritize healthy and local food.

1. Educate local jurisdictions and community institutions on “buy local” policies and advocate for their adoption.
2. Advocate for school districts to implement school gardens with a nutrition education component.
3. Provide educational materials and menu recommendations for healthy meals to be served at large-scale feeding sites such as homeless shelters, senior centers and hospitals.
4. Work with childcare centers and family day care homes to promote wellness policies, prioritize nutrition, purchase local healthy foods, participate in food programs and create gardening programs.

¹ The Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo is working on an affordable housing project, which incorporates a permaculture element into the project design. Residents will be able to grow healthy food onsite. This will be a pilot project, but if successful, should be mimicked to some extent with all affordable housing sites.

5. Work with school districts to ensure that school wellness policies prioritize nutrition through classroom education, school gardens and school lunch and breakfast programs.
- C. Make resources available to health providers to both educate patients about proper nutrition and provide appropriate referrals to food assistance.
1. Develop and distribute a resource list for health providers on food sources for low-income communities.
 2. Provide continuing education workshops for physicians and health providers to educate on proper nutrition and how to discuss it with patients.
 3. Create sample grocery lists and weekly menus of nutritious meals for doctors to “prescribe” for their patients.
- D. Increase education and awareness on maintaining a healthy diet.
1. Disseminate information about healthful eating habits through food distribution sites, low-income schools, childcare programs, religious organizations and family centers.
 2. Offer classes to CalFresh recipients and Food Bank clients on healthy low budget cooking and smart shopping.
- E. Increase access to retail outlets that provide fresh produce and nutritious food.
1. Encourage grocery stores and other retail markets in underserved areas to provide fresh produce by offering development and loan incentives,

linking stores to local produce vendors, and through Healthy Corner Store projects.²

2. Educate the County and city governments on the benefits of a Healthy Mobile Vending Ordinance and encourage adoption of a model ordinance.³

LOCAL AGRICULTURE

“Agriculture should support local economic development, address poverty and hunger, and support the sustainable management of natural resources” (Lawrence et al., 2010).

The Issue

Over the past fifty years, food production has increased in scale and efficiency. The modern agricultural industry has revolutionized production and processing technologies, resulting in a more consistent and reliable supply of food, and has made massive economic contributions. However, the current industrial food system is characterized by high-energy usage and waste, consumers are more distanced than ever from their food, and farmers throughout the nation are often among the food insecure population.

Today’s food system is in need of more farms, farmers, and farm income (McIntyre, 2012).

² Healthy Corner Store projects seek to work with small local grocers to improve the availability, quality, and affordability of healthy foods. More information can be found at <http://www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/products/healthy-corner-stores>.

³ Healthy Mobile Vending Ordinances legalize street vending of healthy food (e.g. Uncut and unprocessed produce) and encourage it through incentives such as reduced permit fees and fewer restrictions on allowed areas to operate. More information can be found at <http://www.nplanonline.org/childhood-obesity/products/healthy-mobile-vending-policies>.

Increased investments in local agriculture can help reconnect a community with healthy foods while supporting small farmers, ranchers and fishers. A sustainable food supply is needed to assure food security long term. Thus, protecting agricultural land and food production resources, making food production economically viable, and cultivating the next generation of food producers is essential. A sustainable local food system that is able to meet the needs of residents can be accomplished by increasing the availability of high-quality, affordable food within a community, offering small farmers increased market opportunities, strengthening economic and social ties between food producers and consumers, and channeling a larger share of residents' food spending back to the local economy (Central Coast Ag Network, 2011).

San Luis Obispo County Needs

Expanding Market Opportunities

San Luis Obispo County produces enough food to feed every resident of the County seven and a half pounds of food a day (Settevendemie, 2012). However, the vast majority of this food is consumed outside the County. While it would not be advantageous to keep all of the food within the County (local farmers are supported by exporting their harvest), efforts should be made to retain a greater share of the food for local consumers. To support the viability of farming in San Luis Obispo County, market opportunities need to be increased.

Farm to School and Farm to Institution programs emphasize local purchasing and establish connections between food producers and institutions. These programs are beneficial to the food producer by providing new markets, and schools and institutions benefit from fresh local food. The Farm to School movement is gaining momentum in

San Luis Obispo County schools; at least half of the schools in San Luis Obispo County's fourteen districts participate in Farm to School activities and programs that promote (Kiley, 2010). Farm to School programs provide a potentially large and reliable market for local farmers, but farmers still have concerns about whether schools will commit to buying what they grow, and whether they can grow enough food to meet the demands. Additionally, food service directors may prefer to get all of their food from one source, rather than several local farms.

A common challenge small farmers face is a lack of distribution infrastructure. Food hubs aggregate the processing and distribution of food in a community, enabling farmers to capitalize on larger volume market opportunities such as restaurants, grocery stores, schools, hospitals and universities. In 2007, Coast Grown received a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant to form the Coast Grown Cooperative of 18 independent farms and ranches along the Central Coast and to build the first mobile harvest unit in California (Barham, et al., 2012). Efforts should be made to support the development of this food hub.

Gleaning

Gleaning is the collection of leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or from fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. GleanSLO, a program operated by the Food Bank, has expanded this definition to include the collection of surplus produce from backyards and gardens of community residents (GleanSLO, n.d.). In 2011, GleanSLO gleaned and donated 38,000 pounds of produce from local farms (GleanSLO, n.d.). However, there are many crops that do not get gleaned, and are left on the farm to rot. A system, such as a gleaning hotline, could

streamline the process of connecting gleaners with available produce. Additionally, “Plant an Extra Row”, or “Grow a Row” programs are an easy way to increase the volume of fresh local produce available to the Food Bank and other distribution sites. As their name implies, these programs encourage food producers, whether backyard gardeners or large-scale farmers, to plant an extra row of crops to be donated.

Economic Development

Agriculture is a major component of the County’s economy, and should be promoted as an economic development tool. In 2011, total animal, field, fruit and nut, nursery and vegetable products produced in San Luis Obispo County were valued at \$736,206,000, a record year for the County (SLO County Department of Ag, 2012). However, more than half of farm owners report a primary occupation other than farming (Crabb, 2012). This data indicates economic difficulty in farming as a single occupation. The Economic Element of the County’s General Plan contains a policy (policy 2f) that reads, *Take action to help agriculture remain economically viable* (SLO County Economic Advisory Committee and the Department of Planning and Building, 1999). Strategies proposed in this plan also seek to improve the economic viability of farming.

Both the County and Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC) have acknowledged the importance of agriculture to economic development in their identification of economic clusters. The Economic Element of General Plan identifies an ag-based cluster (agricultural services, biotechnology, and food processing) as one of five recommended sectors suggested for business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts. EVC has also developed an economic strategy in which they have identified six business clusters that represents 90% of the regional job growth in the County since 1995 (EVC, 2011).

One of these clusters is “Uniquely SLO County”, which aims “to position, brand and promote San Luis Obispo County as a choice destination for regional, national, and global visitors” (EVC, 2011). Within the Uniquely SLO County cluster, three sub-groups have been established: Food, Wine, and Tourism. These formal efforts can be supported and enhanced through strategies that attract local food processors, wholesalers, and distributors (e.g. development incentives such as streamlined permits or tax breaks).

Farmers are essential to food security. Without people dedicated to food production, there is no food for our communities to eat. The average age of the principal farm operator in San Luis Obispo County is 59 years old (U.S. Census of Agriculture, 2007). In order for farming to continue at a rate that is able to sustain and feed us, a younger generation of farmers must be cultivated. Agricultural education programs, farm apprenticeships, and efforts to match young interested food producers with available land need to be cultivated. Agriculture as a profession needs to be promoted and supported among the millennial generation.

Resource Conservation

The County can strategically exercise its authority of land use and zoning decisions in unincorporated areas of the County to protect open space and agricultural land. Another policy under goal one of the Economic Element reads, *Protect agricultural resources that make San Luis Obispo County an attractive place for economic development* (Policy 1f). Data from the 2002 and the 2007 Census of Agriculture indicates that San Luis Obispo County saw an increase (20%) in both the number of farms and in total farm land (4%) measured in acres. About 65% of all County land is in farms, and 68% of all farmland is pastureland (Crabb, 2012). The Williamson Act of 1965 provides an incentive for

landowners to keep their land in agricultural use in exchange for lower property tax breaks, and the Right to Farm Ordinance protects agricultural operation from certain nuisance lawsuits (SLO County Economic Advisory Committee and the Department of Planning and Building, 1999). As the County's population grows, it will be increasingly paramount to protect agricultural land and preserve water and air quality.

As previously stated, the Economic Element of the County's General Plan contains a policy focused on the viability of agriculture. One program (program 2f3) under this policy supports the concept of visitor-oriented agricultural uses (agri-tourism activities such as wine tasting rooms, ranch vacations, horseback riding, bed-and breakfasts, etc). Another program (program 2f4) supports the expansion of small business uses on ag land to supplement income. Ancillary activities on ag land can be a great source of supplemental income for small farmers, especially in an area that already has a high tourist population. However, it is important that non-farm activities do not impede the agricultural production of the participating farm, or neighboring farms. For example, tourist activities can lead to increased traffic, which leads to increased air pollution.

Goal, Objectives & Strategies

Goal: A sustainable local food system that is able to meet the food needs of San Luis Obispo County residents.

- A. Increase opportunities for local food processing, distribution, marketing and sales.

1. Collaborate with schools and institutions to implement Farm to School and Farm to Institution programs to increase the purchase of locally grown ingredients.
2. Partner with local agricultural organizations to support the development of a regional food hub network to increase the efficiency of food distribution and increase markets for small and mid size producers.
3. Develop programs for farmers to “adopt” a local community institution (e.g. childcare center, family resource center or school) to distribute extra farm products and provide an educational opportunity.

B. Enhance gleaning efforts.

1. Establish a hotline or website to easily link produce available for gleaning with gleaners.
2. Work with growers to develop a “Plant an Extra Row” program.
3. Encourage individuals to donate surplus food from backyard gardens.

C. Promote agriculture as an economic development tool.

1. Partner with community agricultural and economic development partners to brand and market quality local food production.
2. Support ACTION for Healthy Communities in the creation of a folio regarding the economic impact of local agriculture.
3. Attract and retain local food processing/ wholesaling/ distribution companies through economic development incentives (e.g. streamlined permits or tax breaks).
4. Cultivate the next generation of food producers through school programs, youth job training and community efforts that promote farming, ranching and fishing as professions.

D. Protect and enhance food production resources (e.g. land, water, air quality) and raise public awareness of threats to productivity.

1. Preserve ag land and limit commercial uses on ag land through public education and advocacy on issues such as “right to farm,” Williamson Act and land use planning.
2. Conduct local Food Shed Assessment.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

“The root cause of hunger is a lack of adequate purchasing power in millions of households. When individuals and families do not have the resources to buy enough food, the result is hunger” (Ayres, et al., 2008).

The Issue

Emergency food sources and federal food programs alone will not end hunger. The root causes of hunger and food insecurity must be addressed. Though it is not the sole factor, a lack of financial resources is a major underlying reason explaining why people struggle with food security (Ayres et al., 2008). As such, there is a large correlation between those living in poverty, and those who are food insecure. Those struggling to sufficiently feed themselves and their families are often struggling to provide themselves with other basic resources such as housing and healthcare. Residents with limited financial resources must weigh the critical trade offs of how they spend their money. The more money an individual chooses to spend on one essential resource, the less money he or she has to pay for others.

In addition to individual resources, community resources must also be inventoried and utilized. Collaboration between non-profits, government agencies and institutions will be required to effectively alleviate hunger and related social issues. Ending hunger must be a priority communitywide.

San Luis Obispo County Needs

The local job market coupled with high cost of living aggravates the hunger situation in San Luis Obispo County. In order to alleviate hunger, wages and the costs of other essential needs must also be evaluated. This is an arduous task and will require collaboration with many other community agencies and organizations that are working to address these related issues. Additionally, outreach to these organizations and to the public at large, aimed at illustrating the interconnectedness of jobs, housing, healthcare, and hunger will be critical.

Income & Economy

Located in a rural and coastal area, San Luis Obispo County's economy is driven by agriculture and tourism, which yields a high number of low-paying jobs. In fact, 28% of all jobs in the County earn less than \$1,250 per month, a greater percentage than in California as a whole (U.S. Census OnTheMap, 2010). An income of \$1,250 a month equates to \$15,000 a year, which is just above the federal poverty line. In the STRIDE Food Security Assessment, income was the most notable factor influencing food security. Approximately 60% of the surveyed population was living at or below poverty level, and of those in poverty, 84% were found to be food insecure (STRIDE, 2012). Countywide, the poverty rate is 14% (U.S. Census, 2010, DP03).

The Self-Sufficiency Standard for California is an alternative way to measure a family's ability to meet basic needs. This standard provides a more complete picture than the federal poverty level by taking into account family composition and the geographic cost of living (including housing, food, childcare, medical, transportation and other necessary costs). The Self Sufficiency Standard recognizes that the age of children affects their costs. Since the cost of living in San Luis Obispo County is high, there is a large discrepancy between the federal poverty line and the Self-Sufficiency Standard; for one adult and two children, the poverty line is at \$18,530, the Self-Sufficiency Standard in San Luis Obispo County is \$57,256. An adult may be earning an income well above the poverty line, but still struggling to make ends meet. In this scenario, the adult would need to be working a full time job earning over \$27 an hour to sufficiently provide basic needs for his or her family. This is more than the equivalent of three minimum wage jobs.

Housing

The high cost of housing in San Luis Obispo County is a major contributor to the large discrepancy between the poverty line and the Self-Sufficiency Standard. According to the National Association of Home Builders (2012), the San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles metropolitan area has the 9th least affordable housing market in the nation. The Census reports that 36% of renters in the County have severe housing cost burden (U.S. Census, 2010). This is a higher percentage than Los Angeles, San Jose, San Francisco and New York City.

According to a 2010 survey, almost one quarter of SLO County residents are paying more than half of their income on housing (Applied Survey Research, 2010). The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has set a standard for housing affordability –no more than 30% of one’s income should be spent on housing. As HUD explains, “Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care” (HUD, 2012).

The average rental rate in the County increased 39% between 2002 and 2010. A two-bedroom rental averaged \$1,230 per month in 2010 (Applied Survey Research, 2010). This exceeds the Fair Market Rent rate (which is the rate the Housing Authority will pay for rentals) of \$1,160. STRIDE’s Food Security Assessment found that 52% of the survey population “sometimes” or “often” had to choose between buying food and paying rent or mortgage. This problem affected 62% of Hispanic households, compared to 40% of white households.

Healthcare

When asked how often STRIDE survey participants faced having to choose between buying food and paying for medical expenses, responses were similar; over half of survey respondents had to choose between buying food and paying medical expenses. According to a 2010 survey, 84% of County residents have health insurance, down from 89% in 2006 (Applied Survey Research, 2010). Only 47% of Spanish-speaking parents are insured. Of those without insurance, 74% say it is too expensive and they cannot afford it.

Transportation

Transportation can be another significant cost, whether it is on car payments, auto insurance and gas, or regular public transportation. The Self Sufficiency Standard estimate of average monthly transportation costs for one adult in San Luis Obispo County is \$258. This exceeds the monthly food costs of \$236, and is the third greatest expense behind housing and taxes (Insight, 2011).

Community Organizations and Leadership

While the Food System Coalition will play an instrumental role in alleviating hunger in the County, other organizations will be needed as well. As a community plan, it will need widespread support and endorsement. Outreach to other agencies and community organizations involved in nutrition, health, housing, social services, agriculture, and government will be a part of plan implementation.

Goal, Objectives & Strategies

Goal: Collaborative community efforts to address the root causes of hunger in San Luis Obispo County.

- A. Make ending hunger a community priority in the County.
 - 1. Reach out to community agencies, coalitions and groups, and local government to review this plan, identify their role, adopt action steps and endorse an anti-hunger campaign.

2. Educate the community about the state of hunger and malnutrition in SLO County through a multi-agency PR Campaign to explain interconnectedness of poverty, hunger and wages.
 3. Collaborate with other organizations combating poverty, homelessness, hunger and lack of healthcare to advocate for economic and social justice.
- B. Increase use of existing programs and services that can help families meet financial, health and social needs.
1. Partner with California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) to implement a program for students to intern at health, social services and food programs to connect low income persons with community services.⁴
 2. Work with agencies such as Family Resource Centers, Head Start and Food Bank to conduct Earned Income Tax Credit outreach.
- C. Expand access to low-cost healthcare and pharmaceuticals to reduce a family's dilemma of paying for food or medicine.
1. Increase publicity about and help connect people to health coverage programs (Medi-Cal, CMSP, Healthy Families), Community Health Centers and no-cost health clinics (SLO Noor Clinic) for healthcare.
 2. Educate food insecure persons about programs for filling pharmacy needs such as Pharmaceutical Alliance and Community Health Centers pharmacy.

⁴ E.g. Heath Leads (healthleadsusa.org)

- D. Increase the number of head-of-household jobs, and availability and affordability of housing and transportation through partnering with existing county efforts.
1. Support and collaborate with Homeless Services Oversight Council, Housing Trust Fund, housing authorities, Peoples' Self Help Housing and the new SLO County Department of Social Services (DSS) homeless services coordinator.
 2. Work with Economic Vitality Corporation, chambers of commerce, large employers, and municipal planning agencies to increase the number of well-paying jobs in the County.
 3. Support and advocate for improved public transit and reduced transit fares for CalFresh and WIC recipients to increase access to food, healthcare and social services.

SLO COUNTY FOOD SYSTEM COALITION

"Imagine: Diverse leaders in our County working together, learning from one another, studying our uniqueness and creating a county that makes the most of its abundant resources in a responsible way to provide access to healthy food locally, especially for those who may not have access now" (Hansen, 2012).

The Issue

A food policy council (FPC), as the term implies, is a policy advocacy mechanism meant to promote the objectives of community food security (Winne, Joseph, & Fisher, 1997). Food policy councils and commissions have been developed in several cities as a catalyst for food policy advocacy. Typically made up of stakeholders from a variety of

fields, FPCs are often formed through city or county resolution, and hence are located within the public sector. FPCs usually have a volunteer “board”, few have full time staff persons, and they may be located within a city department (e.g. Public Health), established as an independent commission, or organized as a hybrid private/public organization (established by an ordinance of city council, but function as a non-profit) (Winne, Joseph, & Fisher, 1997).

San Luis Obispo County Needs

The Hunger-Free Communities grant stipulates the awarded agency must work with their local food policy council to create the strategic plan, and if there is no local food policy council, they must create one. San Luis Obispo County did not have a food policy council at the time the grant was awarded. Thus, the Food Bank and the Grant Steering Committee began convening a group of interested stakeholders to start forming a food policy council. This unique version of a food policy council, known as the SLO County Food System Coalition has been meeting monthly since June 2011.

About the Food System Coalition

The Food System Coalition is to be a collaborative network, which brings many individuals and organizations together. Projects conducted from any of the partner organizations will be supported by the Coalition, and additionally, projects will form out of the Coalition. It has been stressed that the Coalition should support, but not duplicate existing efforts to improve the County’s food system.

Mission and Goals

The mission of the SLO County Food System Coalition is, “To promote a sustainable food system that is equitable, profitable, resilient, and health promoting in the county of San Luis Obispo” (SLO County Food System Coalition, 2012). Goals include:

- Create a forum that brings people together from all sectors of the food system to generate new relationships and cross learning.
- Promote policies and programs that increase food security and social and economic opportunity for food producers, distributors and consumers in San Luis Obispo County.
- Support education and programs that encourage San Luis Obispo residents to make choices for a healthy life.
- Serve as a resource to the community to assist in solution-oriented local food system development, programs and projects.

Community Partners

The Food System Coalition will provide a forum for people to bring new ideas, and for collaborative efforts to conjoin. Members of the Coalition come with a broad range of interests and expertise. The Food System Coalition aims to have representatives from all segments of the local food system. Government, businesses, education, faith and non-profit sectors may be represented.

Advocacy

The Coalition seeks to educate community leaders as well as the general public on food system issues, offer public policy ideas, improve coordination between existing programs and efforts, and start new programs that aim to improve the food system. In

addition to building partnerships within the County, it will be important serve an active role with the formation of the California Food Policy Council, and engage with state and federal movements. Advocacy work will be critical in achieving the Coalition's goals, including hunger relief. Establishing an advocacy committee within the Coalition will create a group of individuals focused on advocating at the local, state, and federal levels.

Review of Plan

To help ensure success of the plan, the Food System Coalition will need to monitor the progress of plan implementation. Indicators have been established for each strategy, which can be found beginning on page 54. These indicators will help monitor implementation and determine the success of the plan. Annual measurement will be conducted, and compared to baseline measurements to track progress. Annual review of the plan may lead to slight alterations of the plan or indicators. These findings will be published in an annual report and shared with the community.

Goal, Objectives & Strategies

Goal: A vibrant SLO County Food System Coalition and an effective Hunger-Free Community Plan.

- A. Strengthen the SLO County Food System Coalition by having an engaged and effective membership and maintaining alliances with local, state and national organizations.
 - 1. Ensure the agricultural sectors are adequately represented within the Food System Coalition, and that the Coalition is working towards agricultural issues.

2. Align with statewide and national organizations that advocate for Food System Coalition goals of sustainable local food systems.
 3. Pursue funding to ensure sufficient administrative support for the Food System Coalition to continue its operations.
- B. Establish a Food System Coalition Advocacy Committee to engage in advocacy and community education around local, state and national issues.
1. Research and recommend positions to the Food System Coalition on state and national issues such as the Farm Bill, child nutrition and SNAP.
 2. Research and recommend positions to FSC on local issues such as agricultural preservation, regulations to increase the availability of nutritious food, economic development and public program participation.
 3. Host FSC forums on public policy issues that impact access to nutritious food in San Luis Obispo County.
- C. Review the Hunger-Free Community plan on an annual basis.
1. Establish indicators with community organizations for tracking progress on plan implementation.
 2. Review strategies to examine the need for possible modifications.
 3. Provide an annual report to the community on progress in eliminating hunger in San Luis Obispo County.

INDICATORS FOR SUCCESS

Key

Time Frame

Short: To being within the next year

Medium: To being within two years

Long: To begin within five years

Lead Agencies

Cal Poly Center for Sustainability

CAPSLO: Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County

CCAN: Central Coast Ag Network

Central Coast Ag Cooperative

DSS: County Department of Social Services

Farm Bureau

Food Bank

FSC: SLO County Food System Coalition

GleanSLO

HEAL-SLO: Healthy Eating, Active Living – San Luis Obispo

PEFS: Partnership for Excellence in Family Support

PHD: County Public Health Department

PBD: County Planning and Building Department

UC Coop Extension Master Gardeners

UC Coop Extension Nutrition Education Program

Goal 1: All San Luis Obispo County residents have access to nutritious food.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
A. Increase the availability of healthy and nutritious food from the Food Bank and other community food resources.			
1. Provide incentives to local farmers to provide produce to Food Bank.	▪ Pounds of food received from local farmers	Medium	Food Bank
2. Expand weekend and evening hours of food distribution sites.	▪ Number of food distribution sites with extended hours	Medium	FSC, Food Bank
3. Improve refrigeration and storage systems in food distribution sites to increase ability to distribute perishable foods.	▪ Total pounds of perishable food distributed	Medium	Food Bank

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
4. Maintain and support partnerships with local grocers for the donation of surplus food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pounds of food donated from retail outlets Number of retail outlets donating annually 	Short	FSC, Food Bank
B. Raise awareness and increase utilization of food and nutrition assistance programs particularly among the most underserved populations.			
1. Expand outreach and enrollment efforts for CalFresh benefits through Department of Social Services and community partners such as family resource centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CalFresh participation rate as measured by Participation Access Index 	Short	DSS, Food Bank
2. Identify barriers to CalFresh enrollment at county level and advocate with the County to improve outreach and simplify the application process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CalFresh participation rate as measured by Participation Access Index 	Medium	DSS, Food Bank, FSC
3. Increase outreach to Hispanic population to increase their participation in CalFresh and WIC programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hispanic participation rate in CalFresh and WIC programs 	Medium	DSS, Food Bank, PEFS
4. Expand outreach and education on fresh food distributions including education on how to prepare produce in a healthy way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation and distribution of education materials. Adult obesity rate 	Short	FSC, Food Bank, PHD
C. Increase participation in pre-school, school, after school and summer feeding programs that provide nutritious food.			
1. Collaborate with school districts and nonprofit partners to increase the number of feeding programs available locally for school aged children during school term and during vacation periods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total number and type of feeding programs available to San Luis Obispo County children. Participation rate of school districts in school breakfast and lunch programs 	Medium	FSC, Food Bank
2. Identify school districts with low utilization of school breakfast programs and encourage their expansion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate of school breakfast utilization among each school district 	Short	FSC
3. Increase utilization of feeding programs such as the Child and Adult Care Food Program at family day care homes and childcare centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of childcare providers enrolled in food programs Number of adult day care homes enrolled in federal feeding programs 	Short	CAPSLO
D. Develop sources of sustainable funding for food assistance programs.			

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
1. Pursue direct cash donations via grocery store checkout lines and online banking systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of direct donation mechanisms established Total dollars donated via direct donation 	Short	Food Bank
2. Promote annual donations and the Feed the Hunger Endowment at the SLO County Community Foundation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total dollars donated to Feed the Hungry Endowment 	Short	Food Bank, FSC
3. Collaborate with community partners to conduct more efficient food drives that provide nutritious food with minimal cost.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of pounds of food received from food drive and cost of collection 	Short	Food Bank
4. Continue to seek grant funding from foundations, local, state and federal governments, and community service organizations to support Food Bank infrastructure and products for distribution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dollars in grant awards Number and types of funders 	Short	Food Bank, FSC
5. Collaborate with coalitions such as Partnership for Excellence in Family Support to synchronize resources and leverage funding opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of funding efforts conducted in collaboration with other Coalitions or groups. 	Medium	FSC, PEFS

Goals 2: Improved nutrition of San Luis Obispo County residents who experience food insecurity.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
A. Increase availability of nutritious food in local communities.			
1. Provide greater opportunities for food insecure populations to shop at farmers markets by enabling the use of CalFresh benefits and WIC vouchers, and expand markets to underserved areas through innovative models such as mobile markets, family resource center and school-based markets and swap meets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of farmers markets accepting SNAP and WIC benefits Dollar amount of purchases made with SNAP and WIC benefits at farmers markets Number of new farmers markets or produce vending operations 	Medium	FSC, DSS

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
2. Utilize Central Coast Ag Network's inventory of agriculturally viable publicly owned lands to identify locations for community gardens on existing parkland, public easements, rights-of-way and schoolyards, and support their development with municipalities, schools and community organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of potential sites for community gardens ▪ Number of community gardens in County 	Short	CCAN
3. Create opportunities for onsite food production, such as gardens or green roof in affordable housing projects, and barrel gardens at workplaces, family resource and childcare centers and places of worship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of affordable housing projects with onsite food production ▪ Number of barrel garden sites 	Medium	FSC, UC Coop Extension Master Gardeners
4. Develop joint use agreements for community kitchens to allow communal food preparation and preservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of joint use agreements for kitchens ▪ Number of kitchens available for schools, feeding programs, etc. 	Medium	FSC, CCAN
5. Identify regulatory barriers for food producers, processors and distributors that unreasonably restrict the availability of nutritious food for vulnerable populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of regulatory barriers identified and addressed by FSC advocacy 	Medium	FSC
B. Encourage community institutions to prioritize healthy and local food.			
1. Educate local jurisdictions and community institutions on "buy local" policies and advocate for their adoption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of jurisdictions with a buy local policy 	Short	PHD, HEAL SLO
2. Advocate for school districts to implement school gardens with a nutrition education component.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of school gardens 	Medium	FSC
3. Provide educational materials and menu recommendations for healthy meals to be served at large-scale feeding sites such as homeless shelters, senior centers, and hospitals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of feeding sites utilizing healthy menu recommendations 	Short	FSC, PHD
4. Work with childcare centers and family day care homes to promote wellness policies, prioritize nutrition, purchase local healthy foods, participate in food programs and create gardening programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of childcare and family day care centers with wellness policies ▪ Number of childcare and family day care centers with serving locally sourced food. 	Medium	CAPSLO

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of childcare and family care centers with gardening programs Number of childcare and family day care centers participating in federal food programs 		
5. Work with school districts to ensure that school wellness policies prioritize nutrition through classroom education, school gardens and school lunch and breakfast programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of school wellness policies adopted with a nutrition component 	Medium	FSC
C. Make resources available to health providers to both educate patients about proper nutrition and provide appropriate referrals to food assistance.			
1. Develop and distribute a resource list for health providers on food sources for low-income communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation and distribution of resource list Number of health providers receiving and utilizing resource list 	Medium	PHD
2. Provide continuing education workshops for physicians and health providers to educate on proper nutrition and how to discuss it with patients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of physicians and health providers participating in continuing education workshops 	Long	FSC, PHD
3. Create sample grocery lists and weekly menus of nutritious meals for doctors to “prescribe” for their patients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of physician offices receiving menus and lists Number of physicians writing “prescriptions” 	Medium	FSC, PHD
D. Increase education and awareness on maintaining a healthy diet.			
1. Disseminate information about healthful eating habits through food distribution sites, low-income schools, childcare programs, religious organizations and family centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of food sites, low-income schools, childcare programs, religious organizations and family centers disseminating materials on nutrition 	Short	UC Coop Extension Nutrition Education Program, Food Bank
2. Offer classes for CalFresh recipients and Food Bank clients on healthy low budget cooking and smart shopping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participants in cooking classes 	Short	PHD, DSS
E. Increase access to retail outlets that provide fresh produce and nutritious food.			
1. Encourage grocery stores and other retail markets in underserved areas to provide fresh produce by offering development and loan incentives, linking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of retail outlets offering fresh produce Number of retail outlets offering produce 	Long	PBD

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
stores to local produce vendors, and through Healthy Corner Store projects.	from SLO County farms		
2. Educate County and city governments on the benefits of a Healthy Mobile Vending Ordinance and encourage adoption of a model ordinance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of jurisdictions who have adopted a Healthy Mobile Vending Ordinance 	Medium	FSC, PBD

Goal 3: A sustainable local food system that is able to meet the food needs of San Luis Obispo County residents.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
A. Increase opportunities for local food processing, distribution, marketing and sales.			
1. Collaborate with schools and institutions to implement Farm to School and Farm to Institution programs to increase the purchase of locally grown ingredients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of farm to school programs Number of farm to institution programs 	Medium	CCAN
2. Partner with local agricultural organizations to support the development of a regional food hub network to increase the efficiency of food distribution and increase markets for small and mid size producers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of food hub network 	Long	CCAN, Central Coast Ag Cooperative
3. Develop programs for farmers to “adopt” a local community institution (e.g. childcare center, family resource center or school) to distribute extra farm products and provide an educational opportunity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of an “adopt and agency” program Number of farmers and agencies participating Pounds of food donated to agencies 	Medium	Farm Bureau, CCAN, FSC
B. Enhance gleaning efforts.			
1. Establish a hotline or website to easily link produce available for gleaning with gleaners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of a hotline or database for gleaning Number of farmers using hotline Pounds of food donated through website/hotline 	Medium	Glean SLO

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
2. Work with growers to develop a “Plant an Extra Row” program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of growers participating in plant an extra row program Pounds of food donated through plant an extra row program 	Short	Glean SLO
3. Encourage individuals to donate surplus food from backyard gardens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pounds of fresh food donated from individuals 	Short	Glean SLO
C. Promote agriculture as an economic development tool.			
1. Partner with community agricultural and economic development partners to brand and market quality local food production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of food producers under the Coast Grown label. Number of distributors (restaurants, supermarkets, etc) purchasing Coast Grown products. 	Medium	CCAN
2. Support ACTION for Healthy Communities in the creation of a folio regarding the economic impact of local agriculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of folio 	Short	FSC
3. Attract and retain local food processing/ wholesaling/ distribution companies through economic development incentives (e.g. streamlined permits or tax breaks).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of local food processing/wholesaling/distribution companies 	Long	FSC, County and city governments
4. Cultivate the next generation of food producers through school programs, youth job training and community efforts that promote farming, ranching and fishing as professions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of famers Decrease in the average age of farmers 	Long	FSC, Farm Bureau, Cal Poly Center for Sustainability, CCAN
D. Protect and enhance food production resources (e.g. land, water, air quality) and raise public awareness of threats to productivity.			
1. Preserve ag land and limit commercial uses on ag land through public education and advocacy on issues such as “right to farm,” Williamson Act and land use planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total acreage in farmland % of total revenue generated from non-farm sales/services rendered on ag land Acreage of farmland under Williamson Act contracts 	Long	FSC, Farm Bureau
2. Conduct local Food Shed Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of CCAN's assessment 	Medium	CCAN

Goal 4. Collaborative community efforts to address the root causes of hunger in San Luis Obispo County.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
A. Make ending hunger a community priority in the County.			
1. Reach out to community agencies, coalitions and groups, and local government to review this plan, identify their role, adopt action steps and endorse an anti-hunger campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of agencies who sign declaration of support Number of agencies who agree to take part in plan implementation 	Short	FSC
2. Educate the community about the state of hunger and malnutrition in SLO County through a multi-agency PR Campaign to explain interconnectedness of poverty, hunger and wages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of PR campaign Favorable trends in online/ social media tracking of campaign 	Medium	FSC, Food Bank
3. Collaborate with other organizations combating poverty, homelessness, hunger and lack of healthcare to advocate for economic and social justice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of collaboration on economic and social justice issues 	Long	FSC
B. Increase use of existing programs and services that can help families meet financial, health and social needs.			
1. Partner with California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) to implement a program for students to intern at health, social services and food programs to connect low-income persons with community services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of students involved Number of agencies participating in program Number of clients referred to the service 	Long	FSC
2. Work with agencies such as Family Resource Centers, Head Start and Food Bank to conduct Earned Income Tax Credit outreach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of clients provided EITC assistance 	Short	FSC, Food Bank
C. Expand access to low-cost healthcare and pharmaceuticals to reduce a family's dilemma of paying for food or medicine.			
1. Increase publicity about and help connect people to the health coverage programs (Medi-Cal, CMSP, Healthy Families), Community Health Centers and no-cost health clinics (SLO Noor Clinic) for healthcare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people using Medi-Cal, CMSP, and Healthy Families health coverage programs Number of people utilizing health services at Community Health Centers and Noor Clinic 	Medium	FSC

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
2. Educate food insecure persons about programs for filling pharmacy needs such as Pharmaceutical Alliance and Community Health Centers pharmacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people utilizing Pharmaceutical Alliance and Community Health Centers pharmacy services 	Short	Food Bank
D. Increase the number of head-of-household jobs, and availability and affordability of housing and transportation through partnering with existing county efforts.			
1. Support and collaborate with Homeless Services Oversight Council, Housing Trust Fund, housing authorities, Peoples' Self Help Housing, and the new SLO County Department of Social Services (DSS) homeless services coordinator.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people paying more than 30% of their income on rent 	Medium	FSC
2. Work with Economic Vitality Corporation, chambers of commerce, large employers, and municipal planning agencies to increase the number of well-paying jobs in County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of head-of-household jobs 	Long	FSC
3. Support and advocate for improved public transit and reduced fares for CalFresh and WIC recipients to increase access to food, healthcare and social services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of transit lines that connect low-income neighborhoods to goods and services 	Long	FSC

Goal 5: A vibrant SLO County Food System Coalition and an effective Hunger-Free Community Plan.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
A. Strengthen the SLO County Food System Coalition by having an engaged and effective membership and maintaining alliances with local, state and national organizations.			
1. Ensure the agricultural sectors are adequately represented within the Food System Coalition, and that the Coalition is working towards agricultural issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of agricultural representatives on coalition 	Short	FSC
2. Align with statewide and national organizations that advocate for Food System Coalition goals of sustainable local food systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of statewide and national organizations with which FSC has affiliated 	Short	FSC

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
3. Pursue funding to ensure sufficient administrative support for the Food System Coalition to continue its operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of an administrative committee with defined term and responsibilities 	Short	FSC
B. Establish a Food System Coalition Advocacy Committee to engage in advocacy and community education around local, state and national issues.			
1. Research and recommend positions to FSC on state and national issues such as Farm Bill, child nutrition and SNAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-annual update/discussion with Coalition on state and national issues 	Medium	FSC
2. Research and recommend positions to FSC on local issues such as agricultural preservation, regulations to increase the availability of nutritious food, economic development and public program participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-annual update/discussion with Coalition on local issues 	Medium	FSC
3. Host FSC forums on public policy issues that impact access to nutritious food in San Luis Obispo County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of forums hosted in five years 	Long	FSC
C. Review the Hunger-Free Community Plan on an annual basis.			
1. Establish indicators with community organizations for tracking progress on plan implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create indicators that will be adopted as part of the final plan, as well as a time frame and lead agency for each strategy Establish baseline indicators and measure annually. 	Short	FSC Food Bank, FSC
2. Review strategies for possible modifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review of plan by the Food System Coalition 	Short	Food Bank, FSC
3. Provide an annual report to the community on progress in eliminating hunger in San Luis Obispo County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and disseminate annual report 	Medium	FSC

GLOSSARY

Access: Ability to reach.

CalFresh: Known nationally as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and formerly as the Food Stamp Program, CalFresh provides low-income households with supplemental dollars to buy food or seeds.

Child and Adult Care Food Program: A USDA program that provides meals and snacks to children at family day care homes, childcare centers, homeless shelters, and after-school programs, and to older or functionally impaired adults at adult day care centers.

Earned Income Tax Credit: A refundable federal income tax credit for low to moderate income working individuals and families.

EBT: Acronym for Electronic Benefits Transfer, An EBT is an electronic system that automates the delivery, redemption, and reconciliation of issued public assistance benefits. EBT is the method for distributing CalFresh benefits, California Food Assistance Program benefits, and cash aid benefits.

Equitable: Abundant and available to all.

Farm to Institution/ Farm to School: programs that connects K-12 schools, colleges, hospitals, corporate cafeterias and local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals improving nutrition, providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities, and supporting local and regional farmers.

Food Hub: A business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand.

Food insecurity: The USDA has two classifications of food insecurity. This plan does not distinguish between the two levels. When food insecurity is discussed, it is inclusive of both levels.

- Low food security: reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet; little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake.
- Very low food security: Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.

Food producer: Farmer, rancher or fisher that produces food commercially.

Food security: Access by all people at all times to enough nutritious food for an active, healthy life.

Food Security Assessment: Study conducted by STRIDE that consisted of over 800 face to face surveys. Assessment gathered information about food security at the household level and characteristics specific to populations that may be at risk for food insecurity in San Luis Obispo County.

Food Store Survey: A study conducted by STRIDE that measured the availability and accessibility of food in 45 food stores throughout San Luis Obispo County.

Gleaning: The collection of leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or from fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest, or the collection of surplus produce from backyards and gardens of community residents.

Head-of-household job: Stable, requiring a certain level of education or skill, offering the opportunity for promotion, providing healthcare benefits, and offering a salary that enables the employee to support dependents while having some disposable income.

HEAL-SLO: Short for *Health Eating Active Living San Luis Obispo County*, this coalition was founded in 2005 and is focused on increasing healthful eating and physical activity among San Luis Obispo County children.

Health promoting: Supports the physical and mental health of all participants in the food system.

Healthy Corner Store projects: Partnerships between advocates and local corner store owners that seek to improve the availability, quality, and affordability of healthy foods.

Healthy Mobile Vending: The selling whole unprocessed produce from portable vehicles.

Hunger: Uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food; the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food.

Hunger-Free Community Project: A project consisting of three assessments, the formation of the SLO County Food System Coalition, and the development of a strategic plan to end hunger in San Luis Obispo County. This project was funded by the USDA Hunger-Free Communities grant program, which was created to provide public funding for comprehensive and collaborative efforts to end hunger at the community level.

Local food system: Food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management as well as associated supporting and regulatory institutions and activities in San Luis Obispo County.

National School Lunch Program: A federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential childcare institutions that provides low-cost or free lunches to children each school day.

Poverty: If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. Poverty thresholds are the dollar amounts

used to determine poverty status. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated for inflation using Consumer Price Index.

Profitable: Meaning profitable for all participants in the food system.

Resilient: Thrives in the face of challenges like unpredictable climate, increased pest resistance, declining and increasingly expensive water and energy supplies.

SLO County Food System Coalition: A group formed as part of the Hunger-Free Communities grant, which includes a diverse group of stakeholders involved in some component of the San Luis Obispo food system.

School Breakfast Program: A federal program that provides cash assistance to States to operate nonprofit breakfast programs in schools and residential childcare institutions.

Sustainable: Equitable, profitable, resilient, and health promoting

STRIDE: Standing for Science through Translational Research in Diet and Exercise, this research group was founded by the Cal Poly Kinesiology department and focuses on promoting healthy weight across the lifespan. STRIDE conducted the Food Security Assessment and Food Store Survey as part of the Hunger-Free Communities Project.

Vulnerable populations: The unemployed and underemployed, families living in poverty, senior citizens, the working poor, and other similar groups that struggle with food security.

WIC: Commonly used abbreviation for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants, and Children, a USDA program that provides low-income pregnant women, new mothers, and children under the age of five with nutritious foods, nutrition education and referrals to health and other social services.

REFERENCES

- Applied Survey Research. (2010). *ACTION for Healthy Communities*. Watsonville, CA: Author.
- Ayres, B., Bradley, G., Daly, M., Dean, S., Gulick, M., Horne, K., ... Wolfson, H. (2008). A Blue print to end hunger.
- Barham, J., Tropp, D., Enterline, K., Farbman, J., Fisk, J., & Kiraly, S. (2012). *Regional food hub resource guide*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service. Retrieved from
- Bell, J., & Standish, M. (2009). Building healthy communities through equitable food access. *Community Development Investment Review*, 5 (3) 75-87.
- California Food Policy Advocates, (2010). *2010 San Luis Obispo County nutrition and food insecurity profile*. Retrieved from <http://cfpa.net/county-profiles-2010>
- California Health Interview Survey [CHIS]. (2007)
- California State Department of Education. (2012a) Ed-Data: Fiscal, Demographic, and Performance Data on California's K-12 Schools
http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/App_Resx/EdDataClassic/fsTwoPanel.aspx?#!bottom=/_layouts/EdDataClassic/profile.asp?Tab=1&level=05&reportnumber=16&county=40
- California State Department of Education. (2012b). Data and statistics. 2011 summer meal sites: San Luis Obispo County. Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sh/sn/sfs201140.asp>
- California State Department of Education. (2012c). Data and statistics: Food programs. SNP 2010-11 county profile. Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sh/sn/#annual>
- Centers for Disease Control. (2012). Local school wellness policy. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/wellness.htm>
- Central Coast Ag Network. (2011). *Food resource guide*. San Luis Obispo, Ca: Pasciuto, K.
- Crabb, J. (2012, March 6). Panel discussion. *Demystifying regional food systems: A new look at an evolving trend in farming and food*. Lecture conducted by Center for Sustainability, Cal Poly Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.
- Economic Vitality Corporation [EVC]. (2011.) Go business! Clusters. Retrieved from <http://www.sloevc.org/slo-county-business/slo-county-clusters.php>
- Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County [Food Bank]. (2012).

Food Research and Action Center. (2010). *Hunger and obesity? Making the connections*.

GleanSLO. (n.d.). GleanSLO. Retrieved from <http://www.gleanslo.org/>

Hansen, C. (2012, November 24). Viewpoint: Grant will reveal hunger realities in SLO County. *The Tribune*. Retrieved from <http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2011/11/24/1848289/viewpoint-grant-will-reveal-hunger.html#storylink=misearch>

Hatfield, D., & Gunnell, A. (2005). *Food access in California today*.

Insight, Center for Community Economic Development. (2011) How much is enough in San Luis Obispo County? Retrieved from <http://www.insightccd.org/communities/cfess/ca-sssold/SSS-San-Luis-Obispo-12.html>

Lawrence, G., Lyons, K., & Wallington, T. (Eds.), Introduction. *Food security, nutrition and sustainability*. New York and London: Earthscan.

McIntyre, J. (2012, March 6). *Demystifying regional food systems: A new look at an evolving trend in farming and food*. Lecture conducted by Center for Sustainability, Cal Poly Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.

National Association of Home Builders (2012). State and local data. NABH/Wells Fargo housing opportunity index: 1st quarter 2012 by affordability rank. Retrieved from http://www.nahb.org/reference_list.aspx?sectionID=132

National Cancer Institute. (n.d.) NCI health information tip sheet for writers: Diet and diseases. Retrieved from <http://www.cancer.gov/newscenter/entertainment/tipsheet/diet-related-diseases>

Public Health Law and Policy, & Raimi and Associates. (2008). *How to create and implement healthy general plans*. Retrieved from <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/toolkit-how-create-and-implement-healthy-general-plans>

Public Health Law & Policy. (2009a). *NPLAN: Healthy mobile vending policies*. Retrieved from <http://www.nplanonline.org/childhood-obesity/products/healthy-mobile-vending-policies>

Public Health Law & Policy (2009b). *Healthy corner stores: The state of the movement*. Retrieved from <http://www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/products/healthy-corner-stores>

San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture. (2010). *Reflections: 2010 annual report*.

- San Luis Obispo County, Department of Planning and Building. (1999). *Economic element of the San Luis Obispo County general plan*. Retrieved from http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/General_Plan__Ordinances_and_Elements/Elements.htm
- San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services. (2012). Food assistance. Retrieved from http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/dss/Food_Stamps.htm
- Settevendemie, M. (2012, January 11). *SLO County Food System Coalition Meeting*.
- SLO County Food System Coalition. (2012). *Charter*.
- State of California Employment Development Department. (2012). *San Luis Obispo-Paso Robles metropolitan statistical area (MSA)*. Retrieved from [http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/slo\\$pds.pdf](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/slo$pds.pdf)
- STRIDE. (2012). Hunger-Free Communities: Characterizing vulnerable populations in San Luis Obispo County. Retrieved from http://www.slofoodbank.org/about_hunger.php
- U.C. Cooperative Education San Luis Obispo County. (2012). UC CallFresh nutrition education program. Retrieved from http://cesanluisobispo.ucdavis.edu/Youth_FSNEP/
- U.S. Census of Agriculture. (2007). *County profile: San Luis Obispo County California*. Retrieved from www.agcensus.usda.gov/.../2007/.../County.../California/cp06079.pdf
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). DP-1. Profile of general population and housing characteristics: 2010. Retrieved from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_DP_DPDP1&prodType=table
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). DP03. Selected economic characteristics. Retrieved from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_DP03&prodType=table
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). S2401. Occupation by sex and median earnings in the past 12 months (in 2010 inflation-adjusted dollars) for the civilian employed population 16 years and over. Retrieved from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_S2401&prodType=table
- U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap. (2010). Work area profile analysis, San Luis Obispo County. Retrieved from <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD]. (2012) Affordable housing. Retrieved from <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/>

Winne, M., Joseph, H., & Fisher, A. (Ed.). (1997). Community food security: A guide to concept, design and implementation. Retrieved from www.foodsecurity.org/CFSguidebook1997.PDF

DECLARATION OF SUPPORT

Food is a basic necessity; it is what nourishes and sustains us, yet many households struggle to put food on the table. Locally, about 40,000 San Luis Obispo County residents either go hungry on a regular basis or sometimes do not know when or where they will get their next meal. Ending hunger will need to be a community-wide effort. Please help in the development of a thriving, sustainable, and local food economy in San Luis Obispo County in which every resident has access to fresh, nutritious food.

We envision a future for San Luis Obispo County, which includes:

1. Access to nutritious food for all residents;
2. Improved nutrition of County residents who experience food insecurity;
3. A sustainable local food system that is able to meet the food needs of all residents;
4. Collaborative community efforts to address the root causes of hunger;
5. A vibrant SLO County Food System Coalition and effective Hunger-Free Community plan.

We support the San Luis Obispo Food System Coalition's Hunger-Free Communities Plan through practice, policy, and planning and implementation to alleviate hunger and increase nutrition among all residents of San Luis Obispo County.

Name:

Organization:

Title/Position:

City:

Representation (are you signing on....)

☐ As an individual

☐ For your organization

Phone:

Email:

I/ This organization will commit to the following action(s) to help achieve the goals of the
Hunger-Free Communities Plan (optional):

Thank you for your support!

Signed Declarations of Support can be mailed to: Food Bank Coalition of San Luis

Obispo County | 2212 Golden Hill Road | Paso Robles, CA 93446

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

APPENDIX B: LITERATURE REVIEW

APPENDIX C: BACKGROUND REPORT

APPENDIX D: CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

APPENDIX E: HUNGER-FREE COMMUNITY PLAN FOR SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
(DESIGNED VERSION)

METHODOLOGY

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

This project was divided into three main phases. Phase one consisted of a literature review on hunger, food systems and how food systems relate to planning. This provided a solid understanding of the subject to inform phases two and three. Phase two contained a case study analysis and an in-depth background report, which were conducted in tandem. In phase three, information gathered in phase two was used to create a set of recommendations, resulting in the Draft Hunger-Free Community Plan.

Developing the Plan was an iterative and collaborative process. A key component throughout the planning process was the involvement of community stakeholders. This group of stakeholders largely consisted of those involved with the SLO County Food System Coalition. This Coalition contains representatives from various segments of the food industry, including food producers, food distributors, public health and nutrition experts, and environmental advocates.

PHASE ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Literature Review assesses academic literature, news articles, professional studies and reports, and best practices from the field. Information on food systems, hunger and nutrition is covered. The Literature Review provides a solid understanding of the topic to help inform Phases two and three, and can be found in Appendix B.

PHASE TWO: CASE STUDY ANALYSIS + BACKGROUND REPORT

Case Study Analysis

Research Question: *How have other communities assessed and planned to alleviate hunger?*

Hunger plans are relatively new, and not many communities have created one. However, to help guide the development of the Draft Plan, a case study analysis was conducted of ten existing hunger plans from around the nation. The plans were reviewed in terms of their scope, format, and recommendations. A matrix, which highlights different components of these plans, was created and helped inform the organization of the Draft Plan. Additionally, all of the goals in the ten plans were outlined, to help guide content. Both the matrix and the summary of goals can be found in Appendix D.

After initial analysis of the ten plans, the two Oregon hunger plans stood out due to both their organization and depth of recommendations. Further, Oregon is one of the few jurisdictions with a hunger plan old enough to have gone through the implementation process. A phone interview was conducted with Patty Whitney Wise, the Director of both the Oregon Hunger Task Force and Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon. Whitney-Wise worked on both the 2004 and the 2010 hunger plans for the State of Oregon. During the interview, Whitney-Wise answered questions about their process, parties involved, and successes and barriers. The interview revealed insightful information about the planning and implementation process of the, and successes and barriers of involved in these processes. A detailed review of this interview can also be found in Appendix D.

Attempts were made to interview authors or key players of both King County's *Hunger Relief Now!* and Placer County's *Food Security Needs Assessment and Plan*.

Unfortunately, consent to interview was never obtained.

Background Report

Research Question: *What does San Luis Obispo County's food system currently look like and what are the key contributors to hunger in the County?*

The Background Report details the current condition of the San Luis Obispo County's food system and hunger situation, and was a critical step in planning for food security. The three assessments conducted as part of the Hunger-Free Communities grant (the Food Resource Guide created by Central Coast Ag Network, and the Food Security Assessment and Food Store Survey conducted by STRIDE) were key sources for the Background Report. Additional data was retrieved from the County Health Department, County Department of Social Services, California State Department of Health, California State Department of Education, California Health Interview Survey, the U.S. Decennial Census, The USDA Census of Agriculture, The San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture and other agencies and organizations. This information was used to gain a better understanding of the food environment the County currently faces and was instrumental in guiding the content of the plan. Table 1 outlines these methods, including the questions driving each method and the sources used to obtain the information.

Table 1 - Case Study & Background Report: Questions & Sources

Case Studies	
<i>How have other communities assessed and planned to alleviate hunger?</i>	
Sub-questions	Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What processes have other communities utilized in plan creation? • Would these processes work for the San Luis Obispo Hunger-Free Communities Plan? • What structures have other plans taken? • What recommendations have other plans put forth? • Are these recommendations appropriate for San Luis Obispo County? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placer County Food Security Needs Assessment and Food Security Plan • Call to Action: Ending Hunger Before it Begins • Act to End Hunger: 40 ways in 5 years to make a difference • Hunger Relief Now! A plan to Reduce Hunger in King County • Campaign to End Childhood Hunger in Colorado • Community Recommendations to End Hunger-Twin Cities Hunger Initiative • Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota • New Mexico Plan to End Hunger • Plan to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland by 2015 • Florida Partnership to End Childhood Hunger: Ten Point Plan.
Background Report of San Luis Obispo County	
<i>Who is hungry or food insecure in San Luis Obispo County?</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the common characteristics of this population? (Ethnicity, age, gender, family status, employment status, education) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Security Assessment (STRIDE) • U.S. Census
<i>What are the primary barriers to food access?</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the relationship between poverty and food insecurity? • How does the local economy (cost of living and job market) affect food access? • How is the ability to purchase food affected by the cost of other essential needs? • How does land use and transportation affect food access? • Are people aware of the food assistance resources available to them and are they using them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Security Assessment (STRIDE) • Food Store Survey (STRIDE) • San Luis Obispo Self-Sufficiency Index (Insight, Center for Community Economic Development) • U.S. Census • U.S. Census on the Map • ACTION for Healthy Communities • State of CA Employment Department • National Association of Home Builders
<i>What is the state of local food production?</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is being produced locally? • How much of this food is consumed within the County? • What is the economic impact of agriculture? • Is farming economically sustainable in SLO? • How much land is devoted to agriculture? • What is the capacity of increased agricultural production? • What is the average age of farmers? • How much land is in organic production? • What direct marketing opportunities are available to local food producers? • What efforts are in place to preserve agricultural land? • What efforts are in place to promote local agriculture? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Food Resource Guide (CCAN) • San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture • U.S. Census of Agriculture • GleanSLO • San Luis Obispo County General Plan (Economic and Agriculture Elements) • Economic Vitality Corporation
<i>How nutritious is the food being consumed by residents, and how easy is it to obtain nutritious food?</i>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many times a day does the vulnerable population consume fruits and vegetables? • How many times a day does the vulnerable population consume soda and snacks? • What are the rates of diet related diseases among San Luis Obispo County residents? • What percentage of school children regularly eats breakfast? • How prevalent are healthy retail food outlets compared to unhealthy retail food outlets in SLO County? • How does the cost and availability of healthy food compare to the cost and availability of unhealthy food in retail stores? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Department of Public Health • Food Security Assessment (STRIDE) • Food Store Survey (STRIDE) • CA Department of Education • Public Health Advocacy
<p><i>What resources and services currently exist to address food security and nutrition?</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the non-commercial food distribution outlets? • What is the availability of healthy food at these outlets? • What is being done to address food security and nutrition in public schools? • What nutrition education programs are in place? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Bank • CA Department of Education • SLO County Department of Social Services • UC Cooperative Extension

PHASE THREE: RECOMMENDATIONS

Research Question: How can the causes of hunger in San Luis Obispo County be addressed?

Phase two was the creation of the Draft Plan. Using the information gathered in phase one, the second phase commenced. After review of the existing plans, four key areas, or themes, were chosen around which to structure the Draft Plan. These four areas include Food Access, Nutrition and Hunger, Local Agriculture, and Community Resources.

These are four of the five elements recommended by Mark Winne, Hugh Joseph and Andy Fisher. The fifth element recommended was Policy. The Food System Coalition does not have the authority to create public policy, however, there are a few policy recommendations infused throughout the plan. Instead, the fifth theme of the Draft Plan focuses on the SLO County Food System Coalition, and its role in plan implementation.

After these four themes were selected, a plan template was created, and approved by the Hunger-Free Communities Grant Steering Committee. Then, based on review of the existing plans and the background research, goals and objectives were drafted. These goals and objectives were then brought to the Food System Coalition at one of the monthly meetings for a brainstorming session. A brief presentation on the four elements as they relate to San Luis Obispo County was provided, and then meeting participants broke into four groups, one for each element of the plan. Each group was asked to review the goal and objectives pertaining to their section, revise, add or delete if they felt it necessary, then brainstorm ideas for specific strategies and projects to achieve the objectives. This brainstorming session was very successful; many great ideas were obtained, which formed the bulk of the strategies in the plan.

Incorporating ideas generated from the brainstorming session, an initial draft of the plan was put together. The Grant Steering Committee reviewed this draft and provided further input. A more polished draft, the outcome of this professional project, will be taken back to the Food System Coalition in June 2012, and presented for final amendments.

B

LITERATURE REVIEW

APPENDIX B: LITERATURE REVIEW

This section begins with an introduction to food systems, including definitions of food systems and food system planning, and discussions on how food system planning relates to city planning, and how a holistic examination of a community's food system is required in order to effectively address hunger and nutrition. Then a discussion about the differences between hunger and food insecurity is provided along with some national hunger statistics. The section ends with an overview of nutrition and food access. This Literature review draws upon academic literature, and professional reports from organizations such as Public Health Law & Policy (now Change Lab Solutions), Policy Link, the American Planning Association and Feeding America. Reviewing existing sources on food system planning and hunger provided a solid understating of the field and laid a foundation for the Background Report and creation of The Plan.

FOOD SYSTEMS

Food is part of a complex system; to examine issues of hunger and nutrition, a holistic look at the food system will need to be examined. A food system can be described as “the chain of activities connecting food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management, as well as all the associated regulatory institutions and activities” (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000, p.113). Throughout this system, food takes many paths that have ramifications upon our natural, social, and economic environments.

Interconnectedness

Food is a necessity for all individuals. It is an essential element of daily life and one with which everyone has a relationship. Further, food is intertwined with a multitude of other

systems. As Pothukuchi & Kaufman (1999) argue, the food system is inextricably linked to many other urban systems. For example:

- **Land use** affects how much land is available for food production, where food is produced, where it is sold, and how close it is to where residents live.
- **Transportation** networks dictate how food is transported from point of production to point of sale, and also how consumers reach their food. Household trips to grocery stores and other food outlets contribute a significant portion to total transportation volume. For residents without cars, the public transportation system can affect their ability to access food.
- The food system offers **employment** opportunities throughout all phases of the system and makes a significant contribution to a city's **economy**. Households typically spend anywhere from ten to forty percent of their income (after taxes) on food purchases.
- The affordability of **housing** may affect resident's ability to afford food; when affordable housing is in short supply, poorer residents may be at greater risk of hunger.
- Food has a great effect on our **health**, and an inadequate or unbalanced diet can result in hunger, obesity and a host of food related illnesses.
- **Water** pollution is exacerbated when chemical fertilizers and pesticides used on many farms make their way into the local water systems.
- Food makes up a large portion of solid **waste**. Including food packaging, food wastes make up almost one third of the total waste in many city landfills.

Shortcomings

Due to this interconnectedness of the food system with other systems and activities, the shortcomings of the conventional food system that exists in most communities can be have widespread consequences. A sizeable population, particularly in poorer neighborhoods, has limited access to fresh produce with grave consequences to public health. Economic challenges are pushing family farmers out of business. Housing payments often take precedence over buying food (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999, p. 217-218). As the New York City Council (2010) comments,

Our current [national] system is characterized by high energy usage and waste throughout all phases; [...] loss of farmland to development and degradation; and an obesity epidemic that threatens to reverse generations of public health progress. Because of these challenges, the very system that is meant to sustain and nourish us imposes costs to our health, our economy, and our environment.”
(p. 2)

Community Food Systems

In contrast to the conventional industrialized food system, a community food system prioritizes strengthening the relationships between producers, processors, distributors, and consumers of food (American Planning Association, 2008). A community food system is place-based and promotes environmentally sustainable methods. Further, a community food system promotes ideas of social justice, and is concerned about marginalized populations rather than corporations and agri-businesses. In addition, “A community food system facilitates residents’ access to healthful, affordable, and

culturally appropriate foods at all times—a condition described as ‘food security’”

(American Planning Association, 2008, p. 4).

Food System Planning

Our food system is broken on many levels. With growing awareness of the inadequacies of our current industrial food system, there has been a push towards food system planning; to work towards more sustainable, community based food systems. The City of Toronto is among the cities that have created a food system plan. The City explains, “We cannot wait for [...] governments to understand that cities are the nexus where environment, economy, and society meet and culture is generated. A healthy city will plan for success in ensuring a healthy, safe, culturally appropriate and environmentally sustaining food system for all its citizens” (City of Toronto, 2000, p.32). As awareness of the link between the built environment and public health is increasing, cities are starting to pay greater attention to how they can facilitate healthy behaviors, including healthy eating. Research shows that ten to fifteen percent of one's health status is determined by genes, twenty to thirty percent by behavior, and sixty to seventy percent is influenced by the physical, social and economic environments (Raimi and Associates, 2011).

Food system planning is concerned with improving a community's food system (American Planning Association, 2008). Although food system planning is not currently standard practice, the issue is gaining momentum and “cities are emerging as prominent food chain actors” (Sonnino, 2009, p.432). Many cities throughout the U.S. and Canada are starting to conduct community food assessments, create food systems plans and incorporate food into their zoning and comprehensive plans.

The American Planning Association has identified three types of efforts aimed at improving a food system: programmatic, policy, and planning and regulatory efforts (American Planning Association, 2008). Programmatic efforts refer to focused programs, such as farmers markets or summer meal programs for children, which enhance access to healthy food. Policy efforts are broader than programmatic efforts, and attempt to modify institutional, public, legal structures to improve the food system within a community. Lastly, planning and regulatory efforts that make use of planning tools, such as zoning ordinances and general plans, can similarly improve the food system.

Food System Planning & City Planning

The intrinsic relationship between the food system and cities has been outlined, yet food systems have not traditionally been a concern among city planners. However, that began to change just prior to the beginning of the 21st century. In 1999, Pothukuchi and Kaufman were instrumental in bringing food systems to the planning agenda. In 1997 the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) identified six themes that anchored the planning discipline. One of these themes was “a focus on improvement of human settlements...with emphasis on making places better serve the needs of people.” Pothukuchi and Kaufman assert that air, water, and food are the three essentials of life, and that any quality human settlement needs sufficient access to these three basic resources. They note that planners have been involved with air and water issues, but that food has virtually been ignored. As Raja and Wooten (2010) explain:

Planners have the capacity and training to think systematically about the food system, to engage community members in envisioning and planning a desirable food system, to assess the bottlenecks and opportunities within a community

food system and identify policies and strategies to strengthen and rebuild a food system. (p. 1)

City governments have the power and ability to greatly influence and shape the food system. “Cities have many policy tools they can use to incentivize and promote healthy food retail including land use planning, zoning, economic development and redevelopment, and nutrition assistance” (PolicyLink & The Food Trust, n.d., p.21). For example, cities can provide land for food retailers, identify and market sites for grocery development, conduct assessments to understand how their agencies and departments can foster healthy food retail in underserved neighborhoods (PolicyLink & Food Trust, n.d.).

Food system planning has received increased recognition from the planning profession in the past decade. “The growing planning interest in community and regional food systems is of course bolstered by, and in turn supports, a broader social movement for sustainable and just food systems, and emphasis on localism in food, and public health concerns related to the global obesity crisis” (Pothukuchi, 2009, p. 350). The American Planning Association (APA) has recognized food systems planning as a field within the planning profession and in 2007 adopted a Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning. This policy guide outlines several converging factors that explain the heightened awareness of food systems among planners. Among these factors include:

- Recognition that food system activities take up a significant amount of urban and regional land
- Awareness that planners can play a role to help reduce the rising incidence of hunger on the one hand, and obesity on the other

- Understanding that the food system represents an important part of community and regional economies
- Awareness that access to healthy foods in low-income areas is an increasing problem for which urban agriculture can offer an important solution
- Recognition that many benefits emerge from stronger community and regional food systems (American Planning Association, 2007).

The Policy Guide asserts that current planning activities conducted by land use planners, economic development planners, transportation planners and environmental planners already affect the food system, but APA calls for stronger connections between traditional planning and the emerging field of community and regional food planning. In 2008, APA's Planning Advisory Service (PAS) published a report titled "Planners Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning." This PAS Report identified issues within the food system that planners found most significant. The top issues included farmland preservation, promoting food access through public transportation, planning for mixed-use development to include food destinations, facilitating sustainable agriculture, using zoning codes to regulate food retail, and planning for farmers markets (Pothukuchi, 2009).

Special journal issues have been devoted entirely to food system planning including the *Journal of Planning Education and Research* (Summer 2004) and *Progressive Planning* (Winter 2004). In addition, many academics have written on the relationship between planning and food systems, including Pothukuchi, Kaufman, Born, Raja, and more. This field is still new, but is gaining momentum as it becomes central to the planning field.

Food System Planning & Hunger

In order to examine the issue of hunger, the intricacies of a community's food system need to be examined. As Pothukuchi (2009) states, "Planners are recognizing that, in order to achieve goals related to health, economy, ecology, etc., the local food system needs to be addressed holistically, including the system's internal linkages between production, processing, distribution, retailing, consumption, and the management of wastes" (p. 365). Better integration of food into the fabric of a community can promote movement towards a community food system, and in turn, more adequately address the food security and nutritional needs of a community.

FOOD SECURITY & HUNGER

Many definitions for "food security" exist. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (1996), food security exists when food systems operate in a manner so that "all people, at all times, have physical, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." The Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA defines the term as, "access by all people at all times to enough nutritious food for an active, healthy life." This is the definition used in the Hunger-Free Communities Project. More specific USDA definitions of food security and food insecurity are listed below.

- **High Food Security:** No reported indications of food-access problems or limitations.
- **Marginal food security:** One or two reported indications—typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diet or food intake.

- **Low food security** (food security without hunger): Reports of reduced quality variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake.
- **Very low food security** (food insecurity with hunger): Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake (USDA, 2011a).

The USDA collects national information on *food security*, not *hunger*. According to their data, 85.5 % of U.S. households were food secure throughout the entirety of 2010, leaving 14.5% food insecure at least some time during that year. Of the food insecure households, 9.1% faced low food security, and 5.4% faced very low food security. California experienced food insecurity rates above the national average between 2008 and 2010 (USDA, 2011b).

Feeding America Data

Feeding America, the largest domestic hunger relief charity in the U.S., is a network of more than 200 food banks and distributes more than 2.6 billion pounds of food and grocery products annually to 61,000 agencies nationwide (Feeding America, 2010).

Feeding America has conducted nation wide food study reports every four years since 1993. The most recent report was released in 2010. This study consisted of client data by conducting more than 61,000 face-to-face client interviews, and agency data by administering and more than 37,000 surveys of local charitable agencies (Feeding America, 2010). The depth of the data collected makes this report the most comprehensive study of domestic emergency food assistance ever conducted.

The 2010 Feeding America report indicates that 76% of client households served were found to be “food insecure” according to the federal government’s definition. This is a 5%

increase from the 2005 report. Specifically, 36% are faced with “very low food security” and 39% are faced with “low food insecurity” (Feeding America, 2010). Further findings from Feeding America, which were highlighted in a recent article published by Close-Up Media, Inc. (2012) include:

- 1 in 6 Americans is food insecure
- 1 in 5 American children live in food insecure households
- 1 in 4 African American households is food insecure.

The number of Americans seeking emergency food assistance has been increasing since 1997, with the sharpest increase seen between 2005 and 2009 (Feeding America, 2010). During this period, the number of emergency food clients served by Feeding America increased 46%. The USDA found that there were 49 million food insecure Americans (17.1 million households) in 2008, the highest number recorded since the USDA began collecting this data in 1995 (Feeding America, 2010).

It is common for those struggling to feed themselves to have difficulty paying for other necessities as well. Feeding America (2010) found that one in three emergency food recipients must choose between purchasing food, and paying for another everyday necessity. Specifically, survey respondents are faced with choosing between food and utilities (46%); food and rent/mortgage (40%); food and transportation (35%); and food and medicine/medical care (34%) (Feeding America, 2010). Further, 60% of client households do not own a working vehicle, and 10% are homeless (Feeding America, 2010).

Food Insecure Populations

Children make up a large portion of the nations food insecure population. According to the USDA, 17 million, or nearly one in four children in the U.S. are food insecure (Feeding America, 2010). This means one in four children do not have sufficient food to live an active healthy life. “Hunger affects every aspect of a child’s life—from their health and well being to their education,” says Vicki Escarral president and CEO of Feeding America (Feeding America, Ross Fraser). Poor nutrition can effect classroom performance, and hinder their development. Hunger can be especially detrimental to young children. About 3.2 million, or 9%, of Feeding America clients are children under the age of five.

Seniors also make up a significant portion of the food insecure population. About 2.9 million, or 8% of Feeding America clients are over the age of 65 (Feeding America, 2010). Decreased mobility, limited outside assistance, fixed incomes and other factors that can come with aging can contribute to food insecurity.

In 2009, more than 36% of client households had at least one adult working. The recent recession has certainly impacted the prevalence of hunger. Among the unemployed adult clients, 22% had reported having been unemployed for less than one year (Feeding America, 2010).

There is a strong link between poverty and hunger. Feeding America found that 74% of households served by their network had annual incomes below the federal poverty level in 2008 (Feeding America, 2010). The average household monthly income was \$940 for the month prior to being surveyed (Feeding America, 2010). However, 7% of the

population receiving assistance had incomes above 185% of poverty in 2008, indicating that even individuals living substantially above poverty may be vulnerable to food insecurity (Feeding America, 2010).

Further, almost one in three adults (30%) reported that at least one member of their family was in “poor” health (Feeding America, 2010). Single mothers with children are also particularly vulnerable to food insecurity (Feeding America, 2010). Most of the adults served by Feeding America are women (61%). Single-parent households account for over a third (36%) of all households with children (Feeding America, 2010).

NUTRITION

The availability of food provides no guarantee of its nutritional quality. As Friel & Lichacz (2010) explains:

The increases in per capita calorific intake in the U.S. over the past decade match longer-term shifts in eating patterns, which are increasingly showing a greater intake of sugar and other calorific sweeteners, greater consumption of foods away from the home and greater consumption of fast foods. (p.117)

Drivers of this nutrition transition include:

- Increasing availability of less healthful foods
- Making less healthy food more affordable
- Making more people want to eat unhealthy food, through marketing (Lawrence, et. al, 2010).

Obesity

The nation faces an obesity epidemic. Obesity rates have nearly doubled among adults and more than tripled among children in the past 30 years (Belle & Standish, 2009). A

relationship exists between obesity, poverty and hunger; low-income residents faced with food insecurity are also commonly overweight. The USDA (2005) reports that many low-income individuals who participate in at least one federal nutrition assistance program are also overweight.

If resources are tight, high caloric food is often cheaper and more available than nutritious food; a families food dollar can buy more calories of unhealthy food than of nutritious food. Several factors exacerbate this problem:

- Low-income neighborhoods often lack full service grocery stores and farmers markets. Instead, residents in these neighborhoods often have to rely on small convenience and corner stores where fresh produce and low-fat items are limited, if available at all.
- Healthy food is often more expensive and of poorer quality when it is available in these communities.
- There tends to be a greater concentration of fast-food restaurants, especially near schools, in low-income neighborhoods (Food Research and Action Center, 2010).

Healthy Food Retail

Conversely, there is evidence that increased access to healthy food can result in increased consumption of healthy food. Research supports that a direct correlation exists between access to fresh food retail and a quality diet, which in turn leads to reductions in obesity (Bell & Standish, 2009.). As reported by PolicyLink and The Food Trust (n.d.), in all but one of the fourteen studies that examine food access and consumption of healthy foods, a correlation exists between greater access and better

eating behaviors (p. 16). The presence of a supermarket in a neighborhood is linked to higher fruit and vegetable consumption, and in low-income neighborhoods, each additional supermarket has been found to increase residents' likelihood of meeting nutritional guidelines by one-third (Public Health Law and Policy & Raimi and Associates, 2008). In addition to increasing access to healthy food, supermarkets can have positive economic impacts and contribute to neighborhood revitalization (PolicyLink and The Food Trust, n.d.).

Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act

More than 31 million school children participate in the National School Lunch Program (Wootan, 2012). In December 2010, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) was signed into law. According to the USDA (2012), improving childhood nutrition is the focal point of the Act. This piece of legislation authorizes funding and sets policy for the USDA's core children nutrition programs, including: the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants and Children (WIC), the Summer Food Service Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. For the first time in over 30 years, the act allows the USDA an opportunity to make real reforms to the school lunch and breakfast programs by improving the critical nutrition and hunger safety net for millions of children (USDA, 2010). HHFKA calls for:

Improved nutrition for all foods sold in schools, stronger local school nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, greater accountability for school meals to meet nutrition standards, and improved meal financing to support healthier school lunches. Overall, it means healthier school environments for our nation's school children. (Wootan, 2012)

In January 2011, the USDA issued a preliminary set of school meal nutrition standards.

The proposed standards would:

- Double the amount and increase the variety of fruits and vegetables
- Increase whole grains
- Gradually reduce sodium in school meals
- Limit saturated and trans fat
- Ensure the milk served with school meals is low fat or nonfat
- Establish calorie maximums, as well as minimums, to ensure school meals address both hunger and obesity (Wootan, 2012).

FOOD ACCESS

Issues of hunger and poor nutrition have been clearly linked to limited access to fresh, affordable food (Hatfield and Gunnell, 2005). Barriers to healthy food access can be both physical and financial. Physical barriers point to poor land use and transportation decisions, and financial barriers point to economic problems.

Access to food is an integral component of food security. Since most Americans buy their food from supermarkets, and most supermarkets have a variety of fresh healthy food options, supermarkets are a good indicator of access to healthy food (Bell and Standish, 2009). But increasing food access goes beyond increasing access to supermarkets, as the different needs in each community must be addressed. Bell and Standish cite four different strategies available to policy makers for increasing food access: 1) Develop supermarkets; 2) Improve the product mix at small neighborhood stores and foster healthy small business opportunities; 3) Start and sustain farmers

markets; and 4) promote linkages between local farmers and low-income consumers. Linkages between producers and consumers can be supported through urban farms, Farm to School programs, community supported agriculture, and community gardens.

Inequities

Food access is not evenly distributed. For example, “Areas of predominantly racial and ethnic minorities, and people with low levels of income have little or no access to food stores in general, and healthier food options in particular” (Freedman, 2009, p.383). Inequitable access leads to health disparities in many communities, both urban and rural. “Limited access to fresh foods primarily affects inner-city communities, rural areas, and some older suburbs and is felt most acutely in low-income communities and communities of color” (Bell & Standish, 2009, p.75). Ironically, residents of rural communities, where agricultural production can be bountiful, are often at higher risk of hunger. As Belle and Standish describe, “...residents of these communities plant and harvest the fruit and vegetables that feed the nation, yet they have trouble obtaining fresh foods for themselves and their families” (p.78).

PolicyLink and The Food Trust examined more than 132 different studies on food access, nationwide. These studies confirm that disparities exist in food access among low-income neighborhoods. From analyzing studies on geographic access to food, 89 studies found that disparities existed by race and income, and 9 studies showed mixed results. Among these findings include that low-income zip codes have 25% fewer chain supermarkets and 1.3 times as many convenience stores compared to middle-income zip codes. Further, predominantly Latino areas were found to have only one third as many grocery stores (PolicyLink & The Food Trust, n.d., p. 13). Rural residents tend to

have higher rates of vehicle ownership, but those without vehicles are particularly isolated due to longer distances to grocery stores and fewer public transit options (PolicyLink & The Food Trust, n.d. p. 16).

Transportation inequities exacerbate the problem of food access. The populations that are less likely to live near a supermarket, are also less likely to have an affordable, convenient way to travel to one (Bell & Standish, 2009). Low-income, African American, and Latino households have lower rates of car ownership than higher-income and white households. As Bell & Standish (2009) explain, “The combination of no nearby supermarkets and limited transportation leaves low-income residents with only small grocers and convenience stores near their homes. Not only do these stores stock mainly processed snacks, soft drinks, and alcoholic beverages, but they also charge higher prices” (p.78). The quality of a city’s transit system is a major factor influencing food acquisition for lower-income residents who are less likely to own cars.

Federal Food Assistance

In a recent journal article, top hunger facts from Feeding America were released, including the following:

- 1 in 10 families enrolled in the Food Stamp Program [now SNAP] is Latino
- 1 in 9 white (non-Hispanic) children receive food from Feeding America
- 1 in 8 Americans receive food from Feeding America
- 1 in 7 Americans is enrolled in the Food Stamp Program
- 1 in 3 Latino children receive food from Feeding America (Close-Up Media, Inc, 2012).

SNAP is a safety net for many families; “SNAP is the nations first line of defense against hunger and... is a critical resource for helping low-income and food insecure families to attain a nutritionally adequate diet” (Feeding America, 2010, p.10). The number of people enrolled in SNAP, has increased. Feeding America reports that in June 2009 (the end of their data collection for their 2010 report), approximately 35.1 million people, or 15.9 million households, were enrolled in this federal program (Feeding America, 2010).

Individuals with incomes at or below 130% of the federal poverty level are eligible to receive SNAP benefits (Feeding America, 2010). In the 2010 Feeding America report, 41% of clients interviewed believed they were not eligible for SNAP, mostly due to their income level. However, an analysis of reported incomes shows that 58% of these households would have been eligible (Feeding America, 2010). This points to large misconceptions about SNAP, and calls for greater outreach and education about the program, eligibility, and benefits.

BACKGROUND REPORT

APPENDIX C: BACKGROUND REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the current conditions in San Luis Obispo (SLO) County pertaining to hunger and nutrition. The background information collected helped to identify needs specific to SLO County, and further, helped inform The Draft Plan. The three assessments conducted as part of the Hunger-Free Communities (HFC) grant, the *Food Resource Guide* created by the Central Coast Ag Network and the *Food Security Assessment* and *Food Store Survey* conducted by STRIDE, were key information sources contributing to the creation of this report. Another useful study was the 2010 *ACTION for Healthy Communities Report* conducted by Applied Survey Research. ACTION for Healthy Communities is a cooperative, collaborative effort of individual agencies and organizations that are committed to improving the quality of life in SLO County. Additional data was retrieved from the County Department of Social Services, California State Department of Health, California State Department of Education, California Health Interview Survey, U.S. Census, USDA Census of Agriculture, San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture, and other state and local agencies.

The Background Report is largely organized around the five themes of The Plan. The themes of the HFC Plan were influenced by *Community Food Security: A Guide to Concept, Design and Implementation*, written by Mark Winne, Hugh Joseph and Andy Fisher (1997). In this guide, the authors recommend five topics be included in a food security plan: Food Access, Hunger, Local Agriculture, Community Resources, and Policy. The HFC plan uses the first four suggested themes, and decided to incorporate

policy throughout these four sections. Instead, the fifth section of the HFC Plan focuses on the SLO County Food System Coalition; how it can be a sustaining group, and how they can ensure implementation of the plan.

This chapter begins with an overview of San Luis Obispo County, a summary of government plans and policies that address the food system, and then discusses the characteristics of the populations vulnerable to food insecurity as determined by STRIDE's Food Security Assessment. Following is information on the County related to the five themes of the HFC Plan: Food Access, Nutrition and Hunger, Local Agriculture, Community Resources, and the SLO County Food System Coalition. The chapter concludes with key challenges identified from the research. These challenges provide a basis for plan development.

COUNTY PROFILE

San Luis Obispo County is a rural county located on the Central Coast of California, about midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. San Luis Obispo is bordered by Monterey County to the north, Kern County to the east, Santa Barbara County to the south and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The County encompasses about 3,600 square miles of land and is home to almost 270,000 people (U.S. Census, 2010, DP-1). There are seven incorporated cities within the County, the largest of which is the City of San Luis Obispo, and many unincorporated communities. Figure 1 depicts the boundaries of San Luis Obispo County and provides a geographic context for this project.

Figure 1 - San Luis Obispo County Boundaries

Source: San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building (2012); Wikipedia (2012).

Approximately 83% of the County's population is White and 21% is Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census, 2010). In 2008, 83% of the population five years and older spoke English only at home, and 14% spoke Spanish only at home (Applied Survey Research, 2010). About 78% of family households are married-couple families, and the average family size is three persons (Applied Survey Research, 2010).

Tourism and agriculture are among the largest economic sectors. The County lost 5,200 jobs between 2008 and 2009, dropping from 107,400 to 102,200 jobs in this time period (Applied Survey Research, 2010). The median household income is about \$54,000, less than the California median household income of \$58,000 (U.S. Census, 2010, S2401). However, the per capita income, about \$28,000, is slightly higher than California per capita income (U.S. Census, 2010, S2401). Further, there was about a 20% increase in households (for all family sizes) living in poverty from 2003 to 2009 (Applied Survey Research, 2010).

The median sale prices of homes in the San Luis Obispo area were \$350,000 in 2010, down significantly from \$533,000 in 2006 (Applied Survey Research, 2010). Since 2002, the average rent in the County has exceeded the Fair Market Rent, which is the maximum amount the Housing Authority will pay for rental units. In 2010 the average cost for a two-bedroom rental was \$1,230 per month, which is almost a 40% increase since 2002 (Applied Survey Research, 2010).

Table 2 depicts key demographic and economic statistics about San Luis Obispo County from the U.S. Census (2010).

Table 2 – General San Luis Obispo County Statistics (2010)

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY	2010
Demographics	
Total Population	269,637
Median age	39.4
% One Race	96.2%
% White	82.6%
% Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	20.80%
% Black	2.1%
% Asian	3.2%
% Some other race	7.3%
% Two or more races	3.8%
Housing	
Households with individuals under 18 years	27,806
Households with individuals 65 and over	29,079
Owner occupied housing units	60,920
Renter occupied housing units	41,096
Average household size	2.48
Income	
Median income	\$30,788
Median Household income	\$53,978
per capita income	\$28,231
Poverty	
% of people whose income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level	14.4%
% of families whose income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level	7.8%
% with related children under 18 years "..."	11.2%
% with female householder, no husband present "..."	21.5%

<i>% with female householder, children under 18 "..."</i>	27.7%
<i>% with female householder, children under 5 whose income "..."</i>	35.1%
Food Stamps & Cash Assistance	
Total households	99,653
Total households receiving food stamps	4,284
Total households receiving cash public assistance	5,164

Source: U.S. Census. (2010).

LOCAL POLICY AND GOVERNMENT

The County's authority on land use, transportation and economic development can have a great effect on agriculture and food production. Several policy documents and ordinances in the County address the food system, directly or indirectly. While several elements of the General Plan may affect the food system, this discussion highlights the Agriculture and Economic Elements. In addition, the recently adopted EnergyWise Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, Right to Farm Ordinance and the Williamson Act are discussed in light of their influence on food and agricultural land. However, this is not an exhaustive list of the government plans, policies and regulations that can shape the local food system.

County General Plan

Agriculture Element: The Agriculture Element of the General Plan was originally combined with the Open Space Element, but was extracted in 2010. It is now a separate and optional element of the General Plan. Goals of the Agriculture Element include:

AG1: Support county agricultural production

AG 2: Conserve agricultural resource

AG 3: Protect agricultural lands

AG 4: Encourage public education and participation (San Luis Obispo County

Dept of Planning and Building, 2010).

The Element also highlights several reasons to protect agriculture lands. One of the many reasons provided is, “There is a finite amount of land with the necessary characteristics that will enable the production of food and fiber, the basic necessities of life” (San Luis Obispo County Dept of Planning and Building, 2010, p. 2-9). Thus, the County recognizes the importance of ag land preservation for the future of food production. Once ag land is converted to another use, it is highly unlikely that it would ever return to ag land.

Economic Element: One of the goals in the Economic Element aims to promote a strong and viable local economy. Among the five recommended clusters to focus economic attraction and retention efforts is the Ag cluster, which includes agricultural services, biotechnology, and food processing. A policy to protect agricultural resources also falls under this goal. Additionally, the Economic Element contains several programs that involve actions to help agriculture remain economically viable (San Luis Obispo County Dept. of Planning and Building, 1999).

Energy Wise Plan

The County’s climate action plan is known as the EnergyWise Plan, adopted in November 2011. This plan recognizes the impacts of climate change and outlines greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies as well as recommendations to adapt to a changing climate. The EnergyWise Plan is intended to facilitate the goals of the Conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan.

Agricultural production is one of the GHG emissions sources addressed in this plan.

GHG emissions from the transport of agriculture-related products can be reduced through local food programs. Such programs include:

- Support community gardens in unincorporated areas.
- Continue support of local initiatives to increase local sales of produce grown in SLO County and other agricultural products, including but not limited to the "SLO Grown" campaign and the permitting of local farmers markets.
- Encourage procurement of locally grown and/or produced food for all county events.
- Encourage County vendors and concessionaires to procure and provide locally grown and/or produced food.
- Support and promote the USDA "Farm to School Initiative" and "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" programs.
- Create a local foods program to support food security, local economic development, health, and other benefits (San Luis Obispo County Dept. of Planning and Building, 2011, p. 5-68).

Another source of GHG emissions is solid waste. Food and plant waste currently make up almost 22% of the waste disposed at landfills. One of the strategies to reduce emissions from solid waste decomposition is to implement curbside collection of food waste (agricultural, residential, food service, commercial, industrial sources).

County Zoning Ordinance

Although zoning emerged from an interest in public health and safety, zoning has largely steered away from health interests. However, updated zoning codes can more directly

address food system issues. Zoning can be used to preserve agricultural lands and dictate where food stores, farmers markets and community gardens may locate.

Right to Farm Ordinance

The Right to Farm Ordinance, adopted in 2002, protects agricultural operation from certain nuisance lawsuits. State law and County policy encourages, promotes, and protects many agricultural activities (San Luis Obispo County Dept of Agriculture, n.d.). There are seven criteria that must be met for an agricultural activity to be protected. More information about the Right to Farm ordinance can be obtained from the County Department of Agriculture.

Williamson Act

Also known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, The Williamson Act was designed to help keep agricultural land from being converted to urban land uses. The Act provides an incentive to landowners; in exchange for keeping their land in agriculture use for a minimum of 10 or 20 years (depends on the location), the landowners pay lower property taxes. More than one third of the County's land, and more than half of agricultural land is under Williamson Act contracts (San Luis Obispo County Dept of Planning and Building (2010).

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

STRIDE, an acronym for Science through Translational Research in Diet and Exercise, is a Cal Poly research group focused on promoting healthy weight across the lifespan. One of the objectives of the Food Security Assessment STRIDE conducted for the HFC grant was to characterize the factors associated with food insecurity among vulnerable

populations in San Luis Obispo County (STRIDE, 2012). A survey was administered to over 800 community members in 54 different locations in October and November 2011. Twenty-two agencies were consulted to approximate characteristics and numbers of the County's vulnerable populations. From these consultations, "vulnerable populations" were defined as the unemployed and underemployed, families living in poverty, senior citizens, the working poor and other similar groups (STRIDE, 2012). The survey targeted these vulnerable populations, 75% of whom were food insecure. Following is a summary of the socio-demographics of STRIDE's surveyed population, characterizing San Luis Obispo residents vulnerable to food insecurity.

Age

The sample contained a broad spectrum of ages. The average age of participants was 48 years old. Figure 2 illustrates the age breakdown of survey participants.

Figure 2 - Age of Participants in STRIDE's Surveyed Population

Source: STRIDE. (2012).

Race/Ethnicity

About 21% of the County's population is Hispanic. This assessment intentionally over-surveyed the Hispanic population since they are disproportionately affected by food insecurity. The surveyed participants were 47% Hispanic, 42% White and 11% of another race or ethnicity, referred to as *Other* from this point forward.

Gender

The majority of participants (61%) were female, though it varied greatly among race/ethnic groups. Specifically, 75% of the Hispanic population surveyed was female, but only 51% of the White population. Of those identifying as *Other*, 60% were female.

Household Characteristics

The average household size is 2.9 persons in California and 2.4 in San Luis Obispo County. The average household size among the surveyed population was 3.1, suggesting food insecure families tend to have a larger than average household size. Hispanic participants had the largest households averaging 4.1 persons, and White households the smallest averaging only 1.9 persons.

Most participants (57%) had children living at home, though the percentage of participants living with children was higher among Hispanics than it was among Whites. English was the predominant language spoken among participants; 61% spoke mostly or only English, 30% spoke mostly or only Spanish, and 9% spoke both equally (STRIDE, 2012).

A majority of participants (64%) rented (home rental, hotel, or trailer), 18% were homeowners, 10% were homeless (homeless or live in car) and 8% lived with others (friend, relative or in supportive housing).

Education

In San Luis Obispo County, 88% of residents have graduated high school and 30% have a college degree. Of the surveyed population, only 63% had graduated high school and 13% had a college degree. This indicated a correlation between level of education and food security.

Income

Employment status varied greatly across race/ethnicity; 37% of whites surveyed had at least one working member in the household, compared to more than 84% of the Hispanic participants and 56% of Others. Two or more members of the household worked in 23% of participants' households. Among those with working members in the household, 61% worked full time (22% received benefits while 39% did not). Further, 21% worked part-time, and 17% worked seasonal or temporary jobs. Less than 40% of the sample had no working household members.

The median monthly income in San Luis Obispo County is \$4,637, which is slightly below the median income of California, which is \$4,910 (U.S. Census, 2010). Household income was low among all survey participants; the median monthly income was \$1,200, strongly supporting the idea that food security is closely linked to income. Income also varied across races; Hispanics made significantly less per capita than Whites. This vast spread can partially be explained by the larger average household size of the Hispanic

population surveyed. Additionally, 7% of all participants reported \$0 monthly income.

Figure 3 depicts the income levels of survey participants.

Figure 3 - Median Income of Participants in STRIDE's Surveyed Population

Source: STRIDE. (2012).

Poverty

The poverty rate in California is 14%, and in San Luis Obispo County is 13%. Among the surveyed population, 60% were living at or below the federal poverty level. More than 80% were living at or below 165% of poverty. Hispanic survey participants were more likely (68%) than Whites (53%) or Others (63%) to be living at 100% poverty.

FOOD ACCESS

Access to food, especially healthy and affordable food, is an integral component of food security. Research finds that increased access to healthy food is associated with healthier eating (Policy Link & Food Trust, n.d.). While the County produces an ample supply of food, if residents are unable to obtain access to it, they may face food

insecurity. Community members may access their food through a variety of sources including the Food Bank or other charitable distribution sites, government assistance programs, schools, conventional retail outlets such as supermarkets and corner stores, or direct outlets such as farmers markets or community supported agriculture (farmers markets and community supported agriculture are discussed in the Local Agriculture section).

Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County

The Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County (Food Bank) has been working to alleviate hunger in the County for the past 23 years (Food Bank, 2012). As stated by the Food Bank (2012), “Working hand in hand with volunteers, donors, corporate sponsors and non-profit agency partners, it’s our mission to see that no one in our county goes hungry.” The Food Bank is the emergency food lifeline to San Luis Obispo County’s children, families in crisis, seniors, the homeless, handicapped and disabled, veterans, farm workers, the working poor and disaster victims.

The Food Bank provides nutritious food directly to the public and to 226 partner organizations that also distribute food (Food Bank, 2012). In fact, about half of the volume of food distributed by the Food Bank each year is distributed through other county non-profits including churches, shelters, food kitchens, and local branches of charitable organizations such as the Salvation Army (Food Bank, 2012). In 2011, the Food Bank was able to provide 5.5 million pounds of food. At the Feeding America Rate of \$1.69 per pound, this equates to a value of \$9.3 million of food (Food Bank, 2012).

Nutrition is a top priority for the Food Bank; over 46% of the food distributed is fresh produce (Food Bank, 2012). The food distributed by the Food Bank comes from a variety of sources, including businesses, individuals, farmers, supermarkets, food manufactures, and packing houses. In 2011, local farmers donated 300,000 pounds of produce. In addition, they receive food through America's Second Harvest, the national network of over 200 food banks.

The Food Bank administers several food distribution programs. These programs include: Emergency Food Assistance Program, Healthy Food for Local Families, Senior Brown Bag, Harvest Bag, Lovin' Lunchbox, and Snack Pack (Food Bank, 2012). By partnering with 14 public school and other community groups, the Food Bank is able to serve an estimated 2,860 at-risk elementary children.

In the past five years, the level of need in San Luis Obispo County has grown tremendously. The Food Bank serves those who have income levels below 125% of national poverty levels. This population in San Luis Obispo County has grown from about 12% to 15%. About one in six residents of San Luis Obispo County are food insecure. The Food Bank served 44,000 people in 2011, which is a 40% increase since 2009 and a 90% increase since 2006 (Food Bank, 2012).

Children are disproportionately affected; they constitute nearly 40% of Food Bank clients, but only 19% of the County's population (Food Bank, 2012). Seniors make up another 12% of clients, making children and seniors about half of the population served by the Food Bank. Further, nearly 40% are Hispanic, 7% are African-American, and 2% are Native American. Just over half are female.

Nutrition Assistance Programs

The Federal Food Stamp Program has been renamed SNAP, short for *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*. In California, this Federal program is administered under the name of *CalFresh*. CalFresh helps low-income people buy food via a debit card that can only be used to purchase food items, or plants and seeds to grow food (San Luis Obispo County Dept. of Social Services, 2012).

The County has seen an upward trend in CalFresh cases. CalFresh data is broken down into Non-Assistance CalFresh (NACF) cases, meaning those who receive only CalFresh benefits, and Public Assistance CalFresh (PACF) cases, referring to those who receive cash assistance, through CalWorks or General Assistance in addition to CalFresh. In the 2007-2008 Fiscal Year, there were just over 3,000 NACF cases. That number has continued to rise every year since. In the 2010-2011 Fiscal Year there were over 6,500 cases (J. Fields, personal communication, March 13, 2012). Thus, as Figure 4 shows, the cases have more than doubled in three years. Public Assistance CalFresh cases, have seen about a 25% increase since the 2007-2008 fiscal year, with cases increasing from about 1,750 in 2007-2008, to 2,280 in 2010-2011.

Figure 4 - Non-Assistance CalFresh Case Trends in San Luis Obispo County

Source: San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services. (2012).

San Luis Obispo County has one of the lowest rates of CalFresh participation in the State. While 32,750 individuals are income eligible for CalFresh, only 9,593 participate. Thus, only 29% of those eligible are enrolled in the program. San Luis Obispo County is ranked 53rd out of the 58 counties in California for CalFresh participation rate (California Food Policy Advocates, 2010).

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, better known as WIC, is designed to help pregnant women, new mothers, and young children (up to five years of age) eat well and stay healthy. Data released in 2010 indicates approximately 4,630 County residents participating in the WIC program (California Food Policy Advocates, 2010).

Included in STRIDE's Food Security Assessment were questions pertaining to food assistance programs including CalFresh, WIC, and the Food Bank (or similar programs). Survey results indicate low participation in these programs despite high awareness and

need (STRIDE, 2012). Figure 5 illustrates awareness of food assistance programs.

Figure 5 - Food Assistance Awareness Among STRIDE's Surveyed Population

CalFresh	WIC	Food Bank
84%	79%	89%

Source: STRIDE. (2012).

Knowledge of food assistance programs and resources was fairly high; 84% of all participants had heard of CalFresh, 79% of WIC, and 89% of the Food Bank (STRIDE, 2012). Hispanics were least likely to have heard about CalFresh and the Food Bank. Other participants were least likely to have heard of WIC.

When asked about current or past use of these programs, only 57% reported use of CalFresh, 59% of WIC, and 82% of the Food Bank (or similar programs). Figure 6 depicts utilization of food assistance programs (among those who had heard of the programs).

Figure 6 - Food Assistance Utilization Among STRIDE's Surveyed Population

CalFresh	WIC	Food Bank
57%	59%	82%

Source: STRIDE. (2012).

Figure 7 illustrates program use by those living in poverty. As the graph depicts, over 30% of the survey population that is living at 100% poverty level have never used CalFresh or WIC.

Figure 7 - Food Assistance Utilization Among STRIDE's Surveyed Population Living in Poverty

Source: STRIDE. (2012).

This data supports a strong need for education, outreach, and assistance with these programs. The survey population can benefit from these programs, but there is much confusion about program eligibility. When asked why they were not utilizing these assistance programs, 50% reported “I am not eligible” and another 11% reported, “I don’t know if I am eligible” for CalFresh. Many participants who reported that they did not qualify for these food assistance programs, likely would. Of those reporting, “I am not eligible,” 47% are in poverty, and another 14% of those who responded, “I do not know if I am eligible” are in poverty.

Overall, Hispanic participants were less likely than Whites and Others to utilize any assistance programs, and younger age groups were more likely to use CalFresh and WIC, whereas the Food Bank was utilized more among older populations.

Schools

About one third of San Luis Obispo County's school children were enrolled in the Free and Reduced Price Meal Program in the 2008-2009 school year. The number of children enrolled increased only slightly between 2002 and 2009, from 32% to 34% (Applied Survey Research, 2010). However, there was a 9% increase in the participation rate between the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years, compared to a 2% increase statewide. Participation during the 2009-2010 school year jumped to 43%. Thus, about 14,700 of San Luis Obispo's school children are receiving free or reduced priced meals (CA State Dept. of Education, 2012).

In the summer months when school is out of session, many children are still in need of meal assistance. About 83% of students who receive free or reduced-price meals during the school year do not participate in summer nutrition programs (California Food Policy Advocates, 2010). In the summer of 2011, there were seven sites in the County providing children with free nutritious breakfast, lunch, and or afternoon snacks (CA State Dept. of Education, 2012b).

In the 2010-2011 school year, an average of 6,493 children participated in the National School Breakfast Program each day. As shown in Figure 8 about 71% of breakfasts served were free, 13% were reduced price, and 16% were paid breakfasts. An average of 12,885 children participated in the National School Lunch Program each day. As illustrated in Figure 9, about 61% of lunches served were free, 14% were reduced price, and 25% were paid. In total, about 19,379 breakfasts and lunches were served a day in San Luis Obispo schools in 2010-2011, more than 78% of which (15,139) were free or reduced priced (California State Department of Education. (2012c).

Figure 8 - School Breakfast Program in San Luis Obispo County

Source: California State Department of Education. (2012c).

Figure 9 - National School Lunch Program in San Luis Obispo County

Source: California State Department of Education. (2012c).

Retail

STRIDE's Food Store Survey collected information on the availability and accessibility of food in 45 grocery stores throughout the County. All of the stores surveyed accept CalFresh benefits. The sample included supermarkets, grocery stores, and smaller food retailers, but excluded stores that did not primarily sell food, such as Walmart, other big-box stores and liquor stores.

The USDA has created a market basket of common food items American households purchase. This basket was adapted by the STRIDE team to be more regionally and culturally relevant to San Luis Obispo County. A sample-shopping list of 41 items for a family of four was created and examined during the food store assessment.

On average, the shopping list cost \$90.73, but ranged from \$74.48 to \$111.69.

Food prices were highest in the coast region and lowest in the northern part of the County. Overall, healthier foods were more expensive than less healthy varieties. For example, high fiber bread was 31% more expensive than white bread, and lean meat was 33% more expensive than meat with higher fat contents. However, there was little difference (3%) between non-fat milk and whole milk (STRIDE, 2012). Overall, fresh fruits and vegetables were less available in stores than snack foods, packaged items and soda.

Food Access and the Built Environment

There is growing awareness of the relationship between public health and the built environment. Thus, city planning, particularly land use, transportation and economic development decisions can be instrumental in public health outcomes, and specifically, can shape neighborhood food access and the retail food environment (Public Health Law and Policy & Raimi and Associates, 2008).

A Community Food Assessment is a tool that can be used to gather background data to support policy decisions in the area of health, nutrition and food. It is focused specifically on analyzing a community's food system, from production to waste management. As

described by Public Health Law and Policy & Raimi and Associates (2008), “Community Food assessments provide important data about the quality, quantity, price, and location of food retail of all kinds (including supermarkets, corner stores, farmers markets, and community gardens) within a defined geographic region such as a neighborhood, city, county, or region” (p. 23). These assessments can be a useful tool in documenting how the retail food landscape affects healthy food choices and diet-related outcomes. Food assessments are important in order to make the case for attracting new healthy food retail options or improving existing ones through land use and economic development policy initiatives.

While the Food Store Survey gathered some of the information about the retail food environment in the County, much of it remains unknown. Conducting an assessment to gather more in-depth information about food environments at the neighborhood level throughout the County would help paint a clearer picture of food access and lay the groundwork for future policy decisions relating to nutrition and food access. If areas are found within the County that are not within close proximity to healthy food outlets, the County may want to encourage healthy food retail development in these areas, identify sites in these areas for farmers markets, expand transit lines, provide incentives for convenience stores to carry fresh produce, or allow and encourage healthy mobile vending.

HUNGER & NUTRITION

The intent of the Hunger-Free Communities Project is not only to reduce hunger, but also to increase the nutritional value of food intake among vulnerable populations. Residents

who have a limited amount of financial resources often have a higher intake of unhealthy food as these foods are cheaper, and are often more accessible. Thus, it is not uncommon for those who face hunger to also be overweight or obese (Food Research and Action Center, 2010). One's diet can influence their risk of other health conditions and diseases as well. In fact, unhealthy eating habits are a primary risk factor for five of the top ten causes of death in California (Public Health Law and Policy & Raimi and Associates, 2008). Low-income neighborhoods are more likely to be underserved by grocery stores or dominated by convenience stores and fast food outlets, and residents may find it more difficult to obtain healthy meals, especially if they do not, or cannot drive.

A high intake of fruits and vegetables is important for optimal child growth, weight management, and chronic disease prevention. Eating five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables a day as part of a healthy, active lifestyle reduces the risk of diet related diseases (National Cancer Institute, n.d). This section provides an overview of diet-related diseases in San Luis Obispo County, outlines findings regarding food security and food choices gathered from STRIDE's Food Security Assessment, discusses the food retail environment and highlights current nutrition education and outreach efforts in San Luis Obispo County.

Diet & Diet Related Disease

The California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) indicates that nearly half of San Luis Obispo County residents do not eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, and the 2010 ACTION study found that only one-third of San Luis Obispo County teens self reported getting the daily recommendation of five or more fruits and vegetables. In

2007, almost half (49%) of adults in San Luis Obispo were overweight or obese. In 2008, about 40% of children five to nineteen years old were at risk of becoming overweight or were already overweight, putting them at greater risk to becoming obese later in life (Applied Survey Research, 2010).

Table 3 shows the three-year average of deaths for certain diet related diseases in San Luis Obispo County between 2008 and 2010. A three-year average tends to reduce the year-to-year fluctuations and increase the stability of estimates (CA Dept. of Public Health, 2012). In addition, it depicts the crude death rate (number of deaths, divided by total population, and multiplied by a base of 100,000) and an age-adjusted death rate. The age-adjusted rate neutralizes differing age structures of a population, and is thus the best figure to use when making comparisons across jurisdictions. The crude death rate and age-adjusted death rate for the State of California are provided, as is the 2010 Health People National Objective (the national target rate).

Table 3 - Diet Related Health Statistics (2008-2010)

	San Luis Obispo County			California		Healthy People 2010 National Objective
Deaths Due to:	2008-2010 Deaths (average)	Crude Death Rate	Age-Adjusted Death Rate	Crude Death Rate	Age-Adjusted Death Rate	Age-Adjusted Death Rate
All Cancers	529.3	197.5	154.2	143.4	151.7	158.6
Colorectal Cancer	45.3	16.9	13.1	13.4	14.1	13.7
Female Breast Cancer	36	27.5	20.4	22	20.7	21.3
Diabetes	42	15.7	12.2	18.4	19.5	None
Coronary Heart Disease	310.3	115.8	85.3	115.4	121.6	162
Cerebrovascular Disease (Stroke)	187	69.8	49.9	35.1	37.4	50

Source: California Department of Public Health. (2012).

Diet Findings from STRIDE's Food Security Assessment

Participants in STRIDE's Food Security Assessment were asked to report on both their food buying and consumption habits. On average, participants went grocery shopping about once a week, and also went out to eat or bought prepared foods about once a week. When asked about consumption habits, emphasis was placed on fruits and vegetables, and soda and snacks. On average, participants consumed fruits and vegetables (including fresh, frozen, and canned) twice a day. More than one third of participants reported eating fruits and vegetables less than once per day. There were no significant differences by age, sex, race/ethnicity or poverty level for consumption of fruit and vegetables. Figure 11 illustrates survey participants' fruit and vegetable consumption.

Figure 10 - Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Among STRIDE's Survey Population

Source: STRIDE, (2012).

Participants reported consuming snacks and soda less frequently than fruits and vegetables. On average, participants consumed snacks and soda 1.7 times per day. Again, there were no significant differences in reporting among sex, race/ethnicity, or poverty level, but younger participants reported snacking more frequently. Figure 11 illustrates survey participants' snack and soda consumption.

Figure 11 - Soda and Snack Consumption Among STRIDE's Survey Population

Source: STRIDE. (2012).

Measuring Healthy Food Environments

The Retail Food Environment Index (RFEI) measures the prevalence of unhealthy retail food against the prevalence of healthy food retail. The RFEI is calculated by dividing the total number of fast-food restaurants and convenience stores, by the total number of supermarkets, produce stores, and farmers markets. Thus, a lower RFEI indicates a healthier retail food environment. A retail food environment is described as “the collection of retail businesses available in communities as options for purchasing food” (California Center for Public Health Advocacy, 2007). Increasing evidence suggests that environmental factors, including the retail food environment, influence the types and quantities of food that people purchase and consume.

San Luis Obispo County’s RFEI of 2.01 is one of the lowest RFEIs in the State (California Center for Public Health Advocacy, 2007). This means that there are about twice as many fast food and convenience stores than there are supermarkets, produce stores, and farmers markets. The State as a whole has an RFEI of 4.18.

Nutrition Education and Outreach

The San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services and the Public Health Department received a USDA SNAP-ED grant to increase nutrition education services. This grant will allow DSS and Public Health to collaboratively educate CalFresh recipients to make healthier choices with their limited budget. Increased fruit and vegetable consumption will be promoted along with increased physical activity (J. Fields, personal communication, March 16, 2012).

In addition, the County Public Health Department is in the process of adopting a “Buy Local” policy. A tiered system has been established; for any County food purchases, the County will attempt to purchase within tier 1, and if a tier 1 purchase cannot be made, tier 2 will be attempted, and so on down the chain. The four tiers are as follows:

- Tier 1 - Organic and grown within San Luis Obispo County
- Tier 2 - Grown within San Luis Obispo County
- Tier 3 – Grown within one of the five neighboring counties (Monterey, Kern, Kings, Ventura, Santa Barbara)
- Tier 4 – Grown within the State of California (Karle, 2012)

While the County primarily only purchases food for the County jail and Juvenile Hall, this policy is symbolic of the County’s commitment to supporting the local economy by investing in local agriculture, and provides leadership in the buy local movement. Further, a buy local policy improves traceability of food, promotes healthy food, which helps combat obesity, and reduces carbon emissions.

The University of California Cooperative Extension has a CalFresh Nutrition Education Program that serves San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. The program provides evidenced-based nutrition education to CalFresh recipients and other low-income individuals and families. The program seeks to help these community members make better nutrition decisions, maximize limited food budgets and utilize the counties’ unique opportunities. The program also specializes in creating healthy cultures in low-income schools.

LOCAL AGRICULTURE

Local agriculture and food production resources can play an important role in community food security (Central Coast Ag Network [CCAN], 2011). A sustainable food supply is needed to assure food security long term. Thus, protecting agricultural land and food production resources, making food production economically viable, and cultivating the next generation of food producers is essential. This section provides an overview of agriculture in San Luis Obispo County examining agricultural production, direct marketing opportunities, agriculture as an economic development tool and resource conservation.

Agricultural Profile

The USDA releases a Census of Agriculture every five years. The most recent Census of Agriculture (2007) reports that about 51% of the farm acreage in San Luis Obispo County is in family owned farms, 30% in partnerships, 9% in corporate family owned farms and 10% in another type of ownership, such as estates or co-ops. In general, San Luis Obispo agriculture has seen a shift towards more “intensive” agriculture in the past thirty-five years. This means that agriculture is more dependent on irrigation, technology, labor and capital investment, but also yields higher profit potential (SLO County Dept of Ag, 2010). As such, “The future success of agriculture will include overcoming the challenges associated with the availability of irrigation water, the need for additional labor, and preservation of land suitable for intensification” (San Luis Obispo County Dept of Agriculture, 2010, p. 6).

Wine grapes, nursery plants, cattle, strawberries, avocados, broccoli and a host of other vegetable crops are among the top agricultural commodities produced locally. San

Luis Obispo County produces enough food to feed every resident of the County seven and a half pounds of food a day (Settevendemie, 2012). However, the vast majority of this food is consumed outside the County.

Both the number of registered organic producers and the number of organic harvested acres in SLO County grew between 2009 and 2010. However, while organic registrations have increased overall by 71%, some farmers chose to de-register because sales revenues did not compensate for the extra costs required to receive organic certification. Total acres of land registered as organic in 2010 was 11,784, a 16.4% increase from 2009 (SLO County Dept of Ag, 2010). Yet, this organic acreage still makes up less than 1% of all farm acreage in the County (Crabb, 2012).

Direct Marketing

Direct sales are becoming an important trend on the central coast, and in California as a whole. The value of direct sales in this region is over \$2.5 million (McIntyre, 2012).

Opportunities for direct marketing include farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) and Farm to School or Farm to Institution programs.

Nationwide, there has been tremendous growth in farmers markets. According to a USDA Farmers Market Survey, farmers markets have increased from 1,775 in 1994 to 5,274 in 2009 (McIntyre, 2012). There are twenty-one farmers markets operating in the County.

Community Support Agriculture has become a popular way for consumers to buy local, seasonal food directly from farmers (LocalHarvest, Inc., 2012). In 1986, there were two

CSA operations in the United States, and by 2010 there were over 2,500 (McIntyre, 2012). Typically, members, or “shareholders” of the farm or garden pledge their support in advance to help cover the anticipated costs of production. In return, they receive “shares” of the harvest through a box of fresh farm products. There are about sixteen CSAs operating in San Luis Obispo County. However, this number was derived from multiple databases, and many CSAs are not listed. This provides an opportunity to increase marketing potential by completing a comprehensive listing (CCAN, 2011).

Farm to School Programs have largely emerged in the past decade. In 2001, there were six known Farm to School programs in the United States. In 2009, there were over 2,000 (McIntyre, 2012). Farm to School and Farm to Institution programs emphasize local purchasing and establish connections between food producers and institutions. These programs are beneficial to the food producer by providing new markets, and schools and institutions benefit from fresh local food.

The Farm to School movement is gaining momentum in San Luis Obispo County schools; at least half of the schools in San Luis Obispo County’s fourteen districts participate in Farm to School activities and programs that promote (Kiley, 2010). Farm to School programs provide a potentially large and reliable market for local farmers, but farmers still have concerns about whether schools will commit to buying what they grow, and whether they can grow enough food to meet the demands. Additionally, food service directors may prefer to get all of their food from one source, rather than several local farms.

A common challenge small farmers face is a lack of distribution infrastructure. While it adds a middleman, food hubs can increase local market opportunities, especially for small farmers. Food hubs aggregate the processing and distribution of food in a community, enabling farmers to capitalize on larger volume market opportunities such as restaurants, grocery stores, schools, hospitals and universities. In 2007, Coast Grown received a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant to form the Coast Grown Cooperative of eighteen independent farms and ranches along the Central Coast and to build the first mobile harvest unit in California (Barham et al., 2012).

Gleaning

Gleaning is the collection of leftover crops both large and small, from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or from fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. GleanSLO, a program operated by the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County, has expanded this definition to include the collection of surplus produce from backyards and gardens of community residents (GleanSLO, n.d). In 2011, GleanSLO gleaned and donated 38,000 pounds of produce from local farms (GleanSLO, n.d). However, there are many crops that do not get gleaned, and are left on the farm to rot.

Economic Development

Agriculture is a major component of the County's economy. In 2011, total animal, field, nursery, fruit and nut, and vegetable products produced were valued at \$736,206,000, a record year for the County (SLO County Department of Ag, 2012). However, more than half of farm owners report a primary occupation other than farming (Crabb, 2012). This data indicates economic difficulty in farming as a single occupation. The Economic

Element of the County's General Plan contains a policy (policy 2f) that reads, *Take action to help agriculture remain economically viable* (San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building, 1999).

Both the County and Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC) have acknowledged the importance of agriculture to economic development. The Economic Element of the County's General Plan identifies the "County's regional agricultural base" as an asset (San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building, 1999). An ag-based cluster, which includes agricultural services, biotechnology, and food processing, is one of five recommended sectors suggested for business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts. EVC has also developed an economic strategy in which they have identified six business clusters that represents 90% of the regional job growth in the County since 1995 (EVC, 2011). One of these clusters is *Uniquely SLO County*, which aims "to position, brand and promote San Luis Obispo County as a choice destination for regional, national, and global visitors" (EVC, 2011). Within the Uniquely SLO County cluster, three sub-groups have been established: Food, Wine, and Tourism.

Farmers are essential to food security. Without people dedicated to food production, there is no food for our communities to eat. The average age of the principal farm operators in San Luis Obispo County is 59 years old (U.S. Census of Agriculture, 2007). In order for farming to continue at a rate that is able to sustain and feed us, a younger generation of farmers must be cultivated.

Resource Conservation

Data from the Census of Agriculture (2007) indicate that San Luis Obispo County saw an increase (20%) in both the number of farms and in total farmland (4%) measured in acres. About 65% of all County land is in farms, and 68% of all farmland in San Luis Obispo is pastureland (Crabb, 2012). The County can strategically exercise its authority of land use and zoning decisions in unincorporated areas of the County to protect open space and agricultural land. Another policy (Policy 1f) under goal one of the Economic Element reads, *Protect agricultural resources that make San Luis Obispo County an attractive place for economic development* (San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building, 1999). Both the Williamson Act and the Right to Farm ordinance help protect agricultural land.

As previously stated, the Economic Element of the County's General Plan contains a policy focused on the viability of agriculture. One program (program 2f3) under this policy supports the concept of visitor-oriented agricultural uses (agri-tourism activities such as wine tasting rooms, ranch vacations, horseback riding, bed-and breakfasts, etc). Another program (program 2f4) supports the expansion of small business uses on ag land to supplement income (San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building, 1999). Ancillary activities on ag land can be a great source of supplemental income for small farmers, especially in an area that already has a high tourist population. However, non-farm activities can also impede on the agricultural production of the participating farm, or neighboring farms. For example, tourist activities can lead to increased traffic, which leads to increased air pollution.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Though it is not the sole factor, a lack of financial resources is a major underlying reason explaining why people struggle with food security (Ayres et al., 2008). As such, there is a large correlation between those living in poverty, and those who are food insecure.

Those who are struggling to sufficiently feed themselves and their families are often struggling to provide themselves with other basic resources such as housing and healthcare. Those with limited financial resources must weigh the critical trade offs of how they spend their money. The more money an individual chooses to spend on one essential resource, the less money he or she has to pay for others.

Fully examining the extent of these economic issues is outside the scope of this project. However, this section attempts to provide a brief overview of how the economy, primarily low wage jobs coupled with high cost of living, is likely aggravating the hunger situation in San Luis Obispo County. Further, the findings discussed in this section demonstrate the need to collaborate with many community organizations that are working to tackle some of these related problems in order to eradicate hunger. Additionally, outreach to these organizations, and to the public at large, to help illustrate the interconnectedness of jobs, housing, healthcare, and hunger will be critical.

Income & Economy

Located on the Central Coast, San Luis Obispo County's economy is driven by agriculture and tourism, which yields a high number of low-paying jobs. Additionally there is a large number of government and public sector workers. The recession has led to dramatic budget cuts in recent years forcing the government to make many layoffs. However, the unemployment rate for the first quarter of 2012, 8.7%, is lower than in it

was in 2011 (CA State Dept. of Employment). Figure 12 shows the break down of jobs by earnings for San Luis Obispo County, and for comparison, Figure 13 shows the same data for the State of California.

Figure 12 - Jobs by Earnings: San Luis Obispo County

Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap. (2010).

Figure 13 - Jobs by Earnings: State of California

Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap. (2010).

As depicted in Figure 12, 28% of all jobs in the County earn less than \$1,250 per month, a greater percentage than in California. An income of \$1,250 a month equates to

\$15,000 a year, which is barely above the federal poverty line. For two people, the 2010 poverty line was at \$14,570 (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2011).

In STRIDE's Food Security Assessment, income was the most notable factor influencing food security. Approximately 60% of the surveyed population was living at or below the poverty level, and of those in poverty, 84% were found to be food insecure. Countywide, 14% of residents are living in poverty (U.S. Census, 2010). Looking specifically at female-headed households with children under the age of five, the poverty rate soars to 35%. Further, Latino households are disproportionately affected by poverty and have, on average, a lower per capita income.

The Self-Sufficiency Standard for California is an alternative way to measure a family's ability to meet basic needs. This standard provides a more complete picture than the federal poverty level by taking into account family composition, and geographic cost of living (including housing, food, childcare, healthcare, transportation and other necessary costs). Some examples of the financial resources needed annually to adequately provide for different family structures in San Luis Obispo County according to the 2011 Self-Sufficiency Standard include:

- Single adult: \$26,193
- One adult and one child: \$35,998 - \$48,750
- One adult and two children: \$36,905 - \$64,154
- Two adults and two children: \$45,018 - \$71,541 (Insight, 2011).

The ranges for each family composition type accounts for the fact that the age of a child affects the cost of the resources they need.

Figure 14 looks specifically at what it costs to provide for one adult with one preschooler and one school aged child. Since the cost of living in San Luis Obispo County is high, there is a large discrepancy between the federal poverty line and the Self-Sufficiency Standard. As the Figure illustrates, the poverty line is at \$18,530 and the Self-Sufficiency Standard for San Luis Obispo County is at \$57,256 for one adult with two children. The Federal Poverty Guidelines as well as the CalWorks and CalFresh income threshold do not come close to being accurate benchmarks for describing one's need. An adult may be earning an income well above the poverty line, but still struggling to provide for his or her family. In this scenario, an adult would need to be working a full time job earning over \$27 an hour to sufficiently make ends meet. This is greater than the equivalent of three minimum wage jobs (Insight, 2011).

Figure 14 - Self-Sufficiency Standard for San Luis Obispo County

Source: Insight: Center for Community Economic Development. (2011).

Housing

The high cost of housing is a major contributor to the large discrepancy between the poverty line and the Self-Sufficiency Standard for San Luis Obispo County. According to the National Association of Home Builders (2012), the San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles metropolitan area has the 9th least affordable housing market in the nation. According to Census data, 36% of renters in the County have severe housing cost burden. This is a higher percentage than Los Angeles, San Jose, San Francisco and New York City.

Action for Healthy Communities reports that 23% of SLO County residents are paying more than half of their income on housing. The U.S Department of Housing and Urban

Development (HUD) has set a standard for housing affordability –no more than 30% of one’s income should be spent on housing. As the U.S Department explains, “Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care” (HUD, 2012).

The average rental rate in the County increased 39% between 2002 and 2010. A two-bedroom rental averaged \$1,230 per month in 2010 (Applied Survey Research, 2010). This exceeds the Fair Market Rent rate (which is the rate the Housing Authority will pay for rentals) of \$1,160. STRIDE’s Food Security Assessment found that 52% of the surveyed population “sometimes” or “often” had to choose between buying food and paying rent or mortgage. This problem affected 62% of Hispanic households, compared to 40% of White households.

Healthcare

When asked how often STRIDE survey participants faced having to choose between buying food and paying for medical expenses, responses were similar; over half of survey respondents had to choose between buying food and paying medical expenses. According to a 2010 survey, 84% of County residents have health insurance, down from 89% in 2006 (Applied Survey Research, 2010). Only 47% of Spanish-speaking parents are insured. Of those without insurance, 74% say it is too expensive and they cannot afford it.

Transportation

Transportation can be another significant cost, whether it is on car payments, auto insurance and gas, or regular public transportation. The Self Sufficiency Standard

estimate of average monthly transportation costs for one adult in San Luis Obispo County is \$258. This exceeds the monthly food costs of \$236, and is the third greatest expense behind housing and taxes (Insight, 2011).

Community Organizations and Leadership

While the SLO County Food System Coalition will certainly be a large player in the fight against hunger in the County, they cannot do it alone. As a community plan, it will need widespread support and endorsement. The Food System Coalition is made of up individuals representing many different organizations. In addition, outreach to other agencies and community organizations involved in nutrition, health, housing, social services, agriculture issues, and government will be a part of plan implementation. Other key players may include:

- HEAL SLO
- Action for Healthy Communities
- Children's Oral Health Coalition
- County Dept of Social Services
- County Health Dept
- SLO Housing Authority
- SLO Housing Trust Fund
- People's Self Help Housing
- Homeless Services Oversight Council
- San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG)
- Family Resource Centers (18 in County)
- Food Bank

- SLO Noor Clinic
- Farm Bureau
- Central Coast Ag Network
- Cal Poly Center for Sustainability
- County Planning
- UC Cooperative Extension
- Community Foundation

SLO COUNTY FOOD SYSTEM COALITION

The Hunger-Free Communities grant stipulates that the awarded agency must work with their local food policy council to create the strategic plan, and if there is no local food policy council, they must create one. After the grant was awarded, the Food Bank and the Grant Steering Committee began convening a group of interested stakeholders to start forming a food policy council. This group, known as the San Luis Obispo County Food System Coalition has been meeting monthly since June 2011.

Activities in the initial meetings included studying models of existing food policy councils, discussions on reaching common ground with potentially contentious and sensitive words (e.g. “sustainable”, “accessible”, “regulation”), and brainstorming project ideas for the Coalition. Joseph McIntyre from Ag Innovations Network, who has helped form many food policy councils across the country, led a discussion at one of the early SLO County Food System Coalition meetings on food policy councils and how the Coalition may want to move forward to meet their goals.

Organization

While still being organized under the leadership of the Grant Steering Committee, the Food System Coalition is intended to be a self-sustaining group once the grant ends.

The Steering Committee is advising that a volunteer administrative committee be formed. Those on the Administrative Committee would serve a one-year term, and handle meeting organization (e.g. securing meeting location, communications, meeting minutes). As a subset to the Administrative Committee, different work groups could form within the Coalition to focus on specific projects (e.g. strategies within The HFC Plan or CCAN's Food Shed Assessment). Membership to the Coalition would remain open to any interested person.

The Coalition aims to have representatives from all segments of the local food system, including production, distribution, health and nutrition activists, environmental advocates, and consumers. Ideally, government, businesses, education, faith and non-profit sectors will all be represented. The Food System Coalition is to be a collaborative network, which brings many individuals and organizations together. Projects conducted from one of the partner organizations will be supported by the Coalition, and in addition, projects will form out of the Coalition. It has been stressed that the Coalition should support, but not duplicate existing efforts to improve the food system.

Mission and Goals

A committee was created to develop a charter for the organization. After several rounds of revision, the charter was adopted by the Coalition in February, 2012. The charter includes a mission statement, vision, principles and goals. The mission of the San Luis Obispo Food System Coalition is, "To promote a sustainable food system that is

equitable, profitable, resilient, and health promoting in the county of San Luis Obispo”

(SLO County Food System Coalition, 2012). Goals include:

- Create a forum that brings people together from all sectors of the food system to generate new relationships and cross learning.
- Promote policies and programs that increase food security and social and economic opportunity for food producers, distributors and consumers in San Luis Obispo County.
- Support education and programs that encourage San Luis Obispo residents to make choices for a healthy life.
- Serve as a resource to the community to assist in solution-oriented local food system development programs and projects (SLO County Food System Coalition, 2012).

The Food System Coalition will be a great asset in fighting hunger and improving the food system in the County. It will be a forum in which people can bring new ideas, and for collaborative efforts to conjoin. The Food System Coalition seeks to educate community leaders as well as the general public on food system issues, offer public policy ideas, improve coordination between existing programs and efforts, and start new programs aimed at improving the food system. In an opinion piece for the San Luis Obispo Tribune, Executive Director of the Food Bank, Carl Hansen, describes a vision for the Food System Coalition:

Imagine: Diverse leaders in our County working together, learning from one another, studying our uniqueness and creating a county that makes the most of its abundant resources in a responsible way to provide access to healthy food locally, especially for those who may not have access now. We can accomplish here what it seems has been impossible lately at the state and national level-leaders that work together for the greater good of all (Hansen, 2012).

Advocacy

In addition to building partnerships within the County, it will be important to remain active in the formation of the California Food Policy Council, and engage with state and federal movements. Advocacy work will play an important role in achieving the Coalition's goals, including combating hunger. Establishing an advocacy committee within the Coalition will create a group of individuals focused on advocating at the local, state, and federal levels.

CHALLENGES

The following challenges for San Luis Obispo County have been identified from the research presented in the Background Report:

- Half of families (52% overall; 62% of Hispanic households) reported having to choose between paying for food and housing. Families with children were more likely to face this dilemma.
- Nutrition assistance programs (e.g. CalFresh) appear to be underutilized by low-income respondents, particularly among middle-aged individuals. Nearly half of poor respondents who were not on CalFresh thought they were not eligible, and a quarter of those not using the Food Bank thought they were not eligible.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables were harder to find in food stores than were snacks and soda. Healthier foods were more expensive than unhealthy alternatives.
- In the past two years, the Food Bank Coalition has seen an increase of 40% in the number of people utilizing their resources, and a 90% increase since 2006
- While San Luis Obispo has a reputation for being a healthy community, 49% of adults in the County are overweight or obese (California Health Interview Survey, 2007), and almost as many (48%) do not eat the recommended five servings of fruit or vegetables a day (Food Bank, 2011).

- San Luis Obispo County produces enough food to feed every resident of the County 7.5 pounds of food a day; yet, over 44,000 people are food insecure
- Children are disproportionately affected; they comprise nearly 40% of Food Bank clients, but only 19% of the County's population (Food Bank, 2012).

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

APPENDIX D: CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

The case study analysis has two parts. The first part included gathering and studying ten existing hunger plans from around the nation. Both the organization and content of these plans were studied to help inform Draft Hunger-Free Community Plan for San Luis Obispo County. The second part entailed identifying one of the agencies that had created a hunger plan to conduct a phone interview with.

A STUDY OF TEN EXISTING HUNGER PLANS

Ten existing hunger plans were studied for both content and organization. Table 4 is the matrix created to compare existing hunger plans. This matrix focuses on the structure and organization of the plan. The Hunger-Free Community (HFC) Plan for San Luis Obispo County is among the few plans broken up into different themes or sections. The number of goals and objectives is about average, but the HFC Plan adds a third tier of recommendations (strategies) unlike many of the other plans. Overall it is longer than all existing plans studied with the exception of King County's plan.

Table 5 summaries all the goals included in the existing hunger plans. Key words are in bold. Goals of the HFC plan have been added to the bottom for comparison. Overall, the HFC goals cover different aspects of the food system and are of a similar nature to those found in many of the other plans. While Table 4 provides a basis of comparison for plan organization, Table 5 provides a comparison for content.

Table 5 – Case Studies: Matrix

											Plan Structure			
	Title of Plan	Short Name	Creator of Plan	Jurisdiction	Size of Jurisdiction	Area (in sq. mi)	Year of Creation	Time to create	Timeline of Plan	Length (pages)	Number of Themes	Number of Goals	Sub-strategies	Other Notes on Structure
1	Ending Hunger Before it Begins: <i>Oregon's Call to Action 2010-2015</i>	OR (New)	Oregon Hunger Task Force/ Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon	State	3.9 million	98,381		9 months	2010-2015	20		3		With each goal is an explanation of why it is a priority, state context, and related information
2	Act to End Hunger: 40 ways in 5 years to make a difference	OR (Old)	Oregon Hunger Task Force	State	3.9 million	98,381	2004		2005-2009	32	4	10	3-6 recommended actions per goal	Each theme has an introduction to the topic before the goals and recommended actions
3	Community Recommendations to End Hunger	Twin Cities	United Way, Twin Cities Hunger Initiative Steering Committee	9-County Metro Area	668,000	114.6			2008-2013	16		3	2-3 objectives per goal	Each objective includes more specific ways to meet objective, the lead partner, and completion time period
4	Placer County Food Security Needs Assessment, and Food Security Plan	Placer Co	University of California Cooperative Extension	County	348,000	1503	2002	9 months		11	5	5	3-4 objectives per goal	Each element has a summary of issue, & summary of placer co needs before goal and objectives
5	Campaign to End Childhood Hunger in Colorado	CO	Campaign to End Childhood Hunger (partnership between Governor's Office, Share Our Strength, and Hunger Free Colorado)	State	5.1 million (total pop, not pop of children)	104,094	2010	about 1 year	2010-2015	24		10	none	Each goal has an extensive narrative and a 2015 vision attached to that goal
6	Hunger Relief Now! A Plan to Reduce Hunger in King County	King Co*	United Way of King County	County	1.9 million	2307	2009	about 1 year		61	2	12		Each goal contains: "Who is Hungry?", Context, Community Voice, Target, Rationale, Key Features for Success, Examples of Success, & Necessary Leaders

7	Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota Strategic Plan	ND	Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota Coalition	State	684,000	70,700			2009-2019	14		6	3-7 objectives, and 1-7 actions per objective	Each goal is based off a specific finding, each objective is assigned a responsible party and target date for completion
8	New Mexico Plan to End Hunger	NM	New Mexico Collaborative to End Hunger	State	2.1 million	121,589	2009			34		5	3-7 objectives per goal	Outcomes, Tactics, Responsible Party, & Cost per year provided for each objective
9	Plan to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland by 2015	MD*	Governor's Office for Children	State	5.8 million	12,407	2010		2010-2015	10		5	1 objective per goal, and 4-11 strategies	Explanation of goal, objective, strategies, and "how it works" description
10	Florida Partnership to End Childhood Hunger: Ten Point Plan	FL	Florida Partnership to End Childhood Hunger (an initiative of two nonprofits)	State	19.1 million (total pop, not pop of children)	65,755	2008			16		10	2-4 strategies per goal	Each goal had a short (one paragraph explanation/rational) and they 2-4 strategies
		SLO	Food Bank Coalition of SLO County	County	270,000	3,615	2012	about 1 year		43	5	5	3-5 objectives per goal	Each objective has 2-5 strategies; strategies have lead agency, time frame, and indicators
	SUMMARIES/NOTES/AVERAGES													
	8 Plans use "Hunger" in title, 1 uses Food Security, 2 are specifically for childhood hunger	* Received USDA Hunger-Free Community Implementation Grant	Generally a Hunger Coalition/Task-Force, Food Bank, United Way, or other non-profit	6 state plans, 2 county, and one metro area plan	Avg pop is 2.7 million, all larger than SLO County	Avg size is 56,608 sq. mi	Oldest plan is 2002, many are from 2009 or 2010	9-1 year typical timeline for plan creation, if specified	Most are 5 yr, if at all specified	Avg. 24-25 pages	Only 3 plans broke goals up into themes	Avg 6-7 goals	3-7 objectives per goal is common, only 3 plans had a third tier, i.e. strategies or actions	

Table 6 – Case Study: Summary of Goals

Case Study Location	Goal Categories	Goal #	Goal
OR (2010)	Economic Stability	1	Increase economic stability for people, communities, and the state
	Food System	2	Cultivate a strong regional food system
	Food Assistance	3	Improve the food assistance safety net
OR (2004)	Family Economic Stability	1	Develop living wage opportunities for Oregonians
		2	Strengthen family stability with programs that offset living expenses
		3	Revamp the tax and lending systems to protect low wage workers
		4	Create an adequate safety net for those unable to work
	Community Food Security	5	Develop and support a sustainable regional food system through community-based solutions, with statewide coordination
		6	Support local farmers and improve the nutrition of Oregonians
	Federal Food Programs	7	Increase participation in underutilized federal food programs
		8	Reduce barriers to participation in federal food programs
		9	Improve and invest in programs at the federal level
	Emergency Food Services	10	Increase the capacity of Oregon Food Bank's Statewide Network
Twin Cities		1	Increasing the amount of healthy food available for distribution in the emergency food system
		2	Enhance the capabilities of emergency food programs to serve food shelf clients
		3	Increase use of government programs throughout state
Placer Co	Food Access	1	All Placer County consumers, and especially low-income consumers, will have consistent access to a nutritious, affordable and culturally appropriate supply of food .
	Hunger and Nutrition	2	All Placer County Residents, especially low-income residents, will have a healthy, nutritious diet that eliminates their exposure to risks of hunger, under-nutrition or malnutrition.
	Local Agriculture	3	Placer County will have an abundant sustainable local food supply that will provide sustenance for all community members and contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of a diverse agricultural community.
	Community Resources	4	All Placer County residents, and especially low-income residents, will have ample well-coordinated, and accessible resources to meet their food security needs .
	Policy	5	Placer County residents and policy makers will understand and support food security policies and efforts that are effective, equitable, economically efficient, and environmentally sound .
CO		1	Provide children access to healthy meals during the summer
		2	Ensure that all children have access to a nutritious breakfast

		3	Support the families with the ability to purchase and acquire food to prepare at home
		4	Ensure the nutrition and health of pregnant and postpartum women, infants and young children
		5	Support child care providers' ability to provide healthy meals and snacks
		6	Help after-school programs provide children with good nutrition and healthy snacks
		7	Encourage children and families to make healthy food choices through nutrition education
		8	Ensure access to high-quality nutritious food in low-income communities and schools
		9	Ensure families can access food from food banks and food pantries
		10	Improve the economic security of working families
King Co	Jump Start Relief (short term strategies)	1	Immediate outreach effort to enroll the lowest incomes and most vulnerable people into the food stamp program and other public benefits
		2	Feed hungry seniors, people with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness and homebound people via meal programs and home delivery or groceries and meals
		3	Serve more meals to low-income children this summer through summer meal programs
		4	Meet critical equipment, staffing, and transportation needs of food banks, meal programs and home delivery of groceries and meals
		5	Increase enrollment of pregnant women, infants and young children in the WIC nutrition program
	Make Long-term system improvements (long term strategies)	6	Strengthen marketing, outreach , technology and state processing for food stamp program and other public benefits
		7	Strengthen and coordinate the community-based food system
		8	Increase the number of low-income students who eat a healthy breakfast and lunch at school
		9	Sign up more child care providers for federal child care food program
		10	Increase nutritional value of food for all strategies in this plan
		11	Form a King County Hunger Reduction Council to reach shared goals and measure progress.
		12	Engage community leaders in advocacy efforts to increase resources and effect meaningful policy changes
ND	(Each goal was in result of a key finding)	1	To establish the resources necessary to make North Dakota hunger free in 2019 by achieving specific, successive levels of service and food availability
		2	To reduce the identified barriers that consumers/clients experience when accessing the local food assistance system
		3	To provide training, assistance and support to the local food assistance providers so that they are able to locate, access and develop the resources that they require (financial, human and other) to meet the feeding challenges in their respective areas
		4	To empower the local food assistance providers to utilize new and effective practices to meet consumer/client needs

		5	To identify and implement efficient, effective methods to recover and utilize the increasing amounts of perishable, prepared and frozen food.
		6	To establish collaborative and mutually supportive partnerships with governmental programs, agencies and services at all levels (local, state and federal) of the food assistance system.
NM		1	Eliminate childhood hunger in New Mexico
		2	Provide adequate food for New Mexico seniors
		3	Improve access to food in rural and underserved communities
		4	Encourage full participation in public food assistance programs
		5	Create pervasive awareness of hunger in New Mexico
MD		1	Ensure that all eligible families with children have access to supplemental food assistance
		2	Provide all children in Maryland with access to a healthy breakfast
		3	Expand the reach of summer meals programs for youth by serving 1 million additional meals
		4	Expand access to nutritious food for pregnant women, new mothers, children and youth
		5	Enhance working families' economic security through expanded utilization of the Earned Income Tax Credit
FL		1	Provide all Florida's Children with a healthy breakfast
		2	Encourage healthy food choices
		3	Help families meet needs at home with food stamps
		4	Improve working families' economic security
		5	Increase families' access to fresh produce
		6	Help after-school programs provide healthy meals and snacks
		7	Expand reach of summer meals programs
		8	Ensure access to balanced, nutritious diets for all pregnant women and preschool children
		9	Ensure access to nutritious food in shelters and food pantries
		10	Provide comprehensive public education about available assistance.
SLO	Food Access	1	All San Luis Obispo County residents have access to nutritious food.
	Nutrition & Hunger	2	Improved nutrition of San Luis Obispo County residents who experience food insecurity.
	Local Agriculture	3	A sustainable local food system that is able to meet the food needs of San Luis Obispo County residents.
	Community Resources	4	Collaborative community efforts to address the root causes of hunger in San Luis Obispo County.
	SLO County Food System Coalition	5	A vibrant SLO County Food System Coalition and effective Hunger-Free Community Plan

INTERVIEW

After studying the ten existing hunger plans, the two plans created for the State of Oregon stood out due to their organization and depth of their plans. These plans are the *Act to Hunger: 40 Ways in 5 Years to Make a Difference* (2004) and *Ending Hunger Before it Begins: Oregon's Call to Action* (2010). Oregon has gone through the process of creating a hunger plan twice, and one of the plans is old enough to have been implemented. Many of the hunger plans were created within the past couple of years, and have not fully been implemented. Like the HFC Plan, both Oregon plans are organized into themes, and recommendations go beyond food assistance and address the economic link to hunger. For these reasons, the Oregon plans were chosen for further study.

On May 15, 2012, a phone interview was conducted with Patty Whitney-Wise, the Executive Director of both Oregon Hunger Task Force and Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon. Whitney-Wise was involved with both the 2004 and the 2010 hunger plans for the State of Oregon. This interview revealed some insightful information about the plan making and implementation process for Oregon's hunger plans. A summary of Whitney-Wise's responses and the interview questions follow.

Impetus for Hunger Plan

In 2004, one of the first hunger plans in the nation was created for the State of Oregon. The first set of food security data was released nationwide in 1999; Oregon was ranked the second hungriest state in the nation. The Oregon Hunger Task force, created in 1989, realized that more than hunger needed to be addressed. Emergency food services and programs were not the answer to ending hunger. Income issues needed to be

targeted. Working closely with the food bank, they created a media committee that promoted “hunger is an income issue.” A series of talking points were developed and provided to the media and legislatures. Shortly after, several State agencies chipped in money for a Director of the Oregon Hunger Task Force (Whitney-Wise) and the creation of the first hunger plan began.

Planning Process

The Oregon Hunger Task Force, which was created by the Oregon legislature and is comprised of non-profits, state agencies, and legislators developed both the 2004 and 2010 hunger plans. Four or five people wrote the first plan in an ad-hoc fashion. Many thought the 2004 plan was too long.

Almost a year was dedicated to the planning phase for the 2010 plan. The planning process was more inclusive. They traveled around the state and held many events and community meetings where they invited all parties involved in the local food system to participate and share their thoughts and concerns about their food system. The main goals of these events were to determine what was already in place, and what was still needed. A steering committee was created and multiple community partners reviewed drafts of the plan. In addition, after the three goals of the plan were determined, they held a statewide hunger summit. About one hundred people involved with food systems and hunger in the state convened and then broke into three groups to brainstorm strategies for each of the three goals.

Planning Partners

National, regional and local partners were involved in the creation of the Oregon hunger plans. These partners include:

- The Oregon Hunger Task force (made up of non-profits, state agencies and legislatures),
- Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon (the 501(c)3 organization of the Oregon Hunger Task Force)
- Western Regional Anti-Hunger Consortium (ant-hunger advocacy organization working in ten western states)
- Food Research and Action Center (FRAC--a nonprofit and nonpartisan research and public policy center that works on hunger and nutrition issues nation wide)

Involvement with government has been mostly at the State level. It is a statewide plan and most programs are operated at the State level. Some work with Federal government has taken place, but city or county governments have not been involved.

Implementation

The first plan was implemented, and progress was made on 30 of the 40 action items of the plan. The NW Health Foundation awarded a three-year implementation grant to the Oregon Hunger Task Force for the second plan, of which they are currently in year two. The Oregon Hunger Task Force is responsible for plan implementation, though they are not implementing it all. For strategies that are beyond the scope or expertise of the Task Force, they identified an individual in another agency with expertise in the area to take the lead. Difficulty was expressed in keeping other agencies accountable for action.

Barriers to Implementation

The largest barrier in implementing the second plan has been the onset of the recession. Rather than expanding programs, the focus has shifted to preserving programs. Another

hindrance has been the termination of General Assistance, which was a safety net for single adults with children.

Successes

If a public policy issue is passed in their favor, they call it a success. If the participation rate in a program goes up, they called it a success. Oregon has had a lot of success with SNAP participation. They have been able to work with state and local agencies to make social service offices more consumer friendly and the application easier to fill out. They have also put great effort into removing the stigma associated with SNAP benefits. Efforts to increase participation in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) have also been successful. In addition, the plan has helped set the legislative agenda, has been effective in getting hunger related programs in the governor's budget, and has been used as an educational tool.

Interview Questions

- 1) Who created the plan, and what was the general process of plan creation?
- 2) Has the plan been implemented, and who was/is responsible for implementation?
- 3) How did the first plan effect the creation of the second plan?
- 4) Who were the major players in the planning and implementation process?
- 5) How were responsibilities/lead agencies assigned (if at all)?
- 6) What measures, if any, were taken to spread awareness and obtain community support?
- 7) What role/involvement has county and/or city governments played?
- 8) How are you measuring the success of the plan?
- 9) Did you have any issues with length or depth of plan?

10) What strategies have been most successful?

11) Have you encountered any barriers in the planning or implementation process?

What has been helpful in addressing barriers?

REFERENCES

- American Planning Association. (2007). Policy guide on community and regional food planning. Retrieved from <http://planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/food.htm>
- American Planning Association. (2008). *A planners guide to community and regional food planning: Transforming food environments, facilitating healthy eating*. Chicago, IL: Raja, S., Born, B., & Kozlowski Russell, J.
- Applied Survey Research. (2010). *ACTION for Healthy Communities*. Watsonville, CA: Author.
- Ayres, B., Bradley, G., Daly, M., Dean, S., Gulick, M., Horne, K., ... Wolfson, H. (2008). A Blue print to end hunger.
- Barham, J., Tropp, D., Enterline, K., Farbman, J., Fisk, J., & Kiraly, S. (2012). *Regional food hub resource guide*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service. Retrieved from
- Bell, J., & Standish, M. (2009). Building healthy communities through equitable food access. *Community Development Investment Review*, 5 (3) 75-87.
- California Center for Public Health Advocacy. (2007). *Searching for health food: The food landscape in California cities and counties*. Retrieved from www.publichealthadvocacy.org/RFEI/presskit_RFEI.pdf
- California Department of Public Health. (2012). County health status profiles 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohir/Pages/CHSP.aspx>
- California Food Policy Advocates, (2010). *2010 San Luis Obispo County nutrition and food insecurity profile*. Retrieved from <http://cfpa.net/county-profiles-2010>
- California Health Interview Survey [CHIS]. (2007)
- California State Department of Education. (2012a) Ed-Data: Fiscal, Demographic, and Performance Data on California's K-12 Schools
http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/App_Resx/EdDataClassic/fsTwoPanel.aspx?#!bottom=/_layouts/EdDataClassic/profile.asp?Tab=1&level=05&reportnumber=16&county=40
- California State Department of Education. (2012b). Data and statistics. 2011 summer meal sites: San Luis Obispo County. Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sh/sn/sfs201140.asp>

- California State Department of Education. (2012c). Data and statistics: Food programs. SNP 2010-11 county profile. Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sh/sn/#annual>
- Centers for Disease Control. (2012). Local school wellness policy. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/wellness.htm>
- Central Coast Ag Network. (2011). *Food resource guide*. San Luis Obispo, Ca: Pasciuto, K.
- Close-Up Media, Inc. (2012, January 4). Feeding America introduces top 10 facts about hunger in the U.S. *Entertainment Close-Up*.
- Crabb, J. (2012, March 6). Panel discussion. *Demystifying regional food systems: A new look at an evolving trend in farming and food*. Lecture conducted by Center for Sustainability, Cal Poly Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.
- Economic Vitality Corporation [EVC]. (2011.) Go business! Clusters. Retrieved from <http://www.sloevc.org/slo-county-business/slo-county-clusters.php>
- Feeding America. (2010). Hunger in America 2010.
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (1996). Rome declaration on world food security and world food summit plan of action. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/w3613e/w3613e00.htm>
- Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County [Food Bank]. (2012).
- Food Research and Action Center. (2010). *Hunger and obesity? Making the connections*.
- Freedman, D. (2009). Local food environments: They're all stocked differently. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 44(3), 382-393.
- Friel, S. & Lichacz, W. (2010). Unequal food systems, unhealthy diets. In Lawrence, G., Lyons, K., & Wallington, T. (Eds.), *Food security, nutrition and sustainability*. New York and London: Earthscan.
- GleanSLO. (n.d.). GleanSLO. Retrieved from <http://www.gleanslo.org/>
- Hansen, C. (2012, November 24). Viewpoint: Grant will reveal hunger realities in SLO County. *The Tribune*. Retrieved from <http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2011/11/24/1848289/viewpoint-grant-will-reveal-hunger.html#storylink=misearch>
- Hatfield, D., & Gunnell, A. (2005). *Food access in California today*.
- Insight, Center for Community Economic Development. (2011) How much is enough in San Luis Obispo County? Retrieved from

- <http://www.insightcced.org/communities/cfess/ca-sssold/SSS-San-Luis-Obispo-12.html>
- Karle, K. (2012, March 6). Panel discussion. *Demystifying Regional Food Systems: A New Look at an Evolving Trend in Farming and Food*. Lecture conducted by Center for Sustainability, Cal Poly Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.
- Kiley, A. (2010, August 11). From farm to school: A national sustainability program is taking off in San Luis Obispo County. *New Times*, 25(2). Retrieved from <http://www.newtimeslo.com/news/4825/from-farm-to-school/>
- Lawrence, G., Lyons, K., & Wallington, T. (Eds.), Introduction. *Food security, nutrition and sustainability*. New York and London: Earthscan.
- LocalHarvest, Inc. (2012). Community supported agriculture. Retrieved from <http://www.localharvest.org/csa/>
- McIntyre, J. (2012, March 6). *Demystifying regional food systems: A new look at an evolving trend in farming and food*. Lecture conducted by Center for Sustainability, Cal Poly Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.
- National Association of Home Builders (2012). State and local data. NABH/Wells Fargo housing opportunity index: 1st quarter 2012 by affordability rank. Retrieved from http://www.nahb.org/reference_list.aspx?sectionID=132
- National Cancer Institute. (n.d.) NCI health information tip sheet for writers: Diet and diseases. Retrieved from <http://www.cancer.gov/newscenter/entertainment/tipsheet/diet-related-diseases>
- New York City Council. (2010). FoodWorks: A vision to improve NYC's food system. Retrieved from http://council.nyc.gov/html/action_center/food.shtml
- PolicyLink & The Food Trust. (n.d.). The grocery gap: Who has access to healthy food and why it matters. Retrieved from <http://www.policylink.org/site/c.lkIXLbMNJrE>
- Pothukuchi, K. (2009). Community and regional food planning: Building institutional support in the United States. *International Planning Studies*, 14(4), 349-367.
- Pothukuchi, K. & Kaufman, J. (1999). Placing the food system on the urban agenda: The role of municipal institutions in food systems planning. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 16(2), 213-224.
- Pothukuchi, K., & Kaufman, J. (2000). The food system: A stranger to the planning field. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 66(2), 113-124.
- Public Health Law and Policy, & Raimi and Associates. (2008). *How to create and implement healthy general plans*. Retrieved from <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/toolkit-how-create-and-implement-healthy-general-plans>

- Raja, S, & Wooten, H. (2010). Food systems planning: An opportunity for planners in private practice. *American Planning Association. On the radar: Food systems*. Retrieved from <http://planning.org/resources/ontheradar/food/>
- Raimi and Associates. (2011). *The skinny on incorporating health into the general plan*. Retrieved from <http://www.raimiassociates.com/presentations.php>
- San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture. (2010). *Reflections: 2010 annual report*.
- San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture. (2012, April 2). 2011 Media release story. Retrieved from <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Assets/AG/croprep/2011MediaReleaseStory.pdf>.
- San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture. (n.d.). *San Luis Obispo County right to farm information*. Retrieved from <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/agcomm/AgRe/RTF.htm>
- San Luis Obispo County, Department of Planning and Building. (1999). *Economic element of the San Luis Obispo County general plan*. Retrieved from http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/General_Plan__Ordinances_and_Elements/Elements.htm
- San Luis Obispo County, Department of Planning and Building. (2010). *Agriculture element of the general plan*. Retrieved from http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/General_Plan__Ordinances_and_Elements/Elements.htm
- San Luis Obispo County, Department of Planning and Building. (2011). *EnergyWise plan: Designing energy and climate solutions for the future*. Retrieved from <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/CAP.htm>
- San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building. (2012). Interactive GIS mapping. Retrieved from <http://www.sloplanning-maps.org/>
- San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services. (2012). Food assistance. Retrieved from http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/dss/Food_Stamps.htm
- Settevendemie, M. (2012, January 11). *SLO County Food System Coalition Meeting*.
- SLO County Food System Coalition. (2012). *Charter*.
- Sonnino, R. (2009). Feeding the city: Towards a new research and planning agenda. *International Planning Studies*, 14(4), 425-435.

- State of California Employment Development Department. (2012). *San Luis Obispo-Paso Robles metropolitan statistical area (MSA)*. Retrieved from [http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/slo\\$pds.pdf](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/slo$pds.pdf)
- STRIDE. (2012). Hunger-Free Communities: Characterizing vulnerable populations in San Luis Obispo County. Retrieved from http://www.slofoodbank.org/about_hunger.php
- Toronto Food Policy Council. (2000). *Food secure city: Toronto food policy council submission to the Toronto official plan*. Retrieved from <http://www.toronto.ca/>
- U.C. Cooperative Education San Luis Obispo County. (2012). UC CallFresh nutrition education program. Retrieved from http://cesanluisobispo.ucdavis.edu/Youth_FSNEP/
- U.S. Census of Agriculture. (2007). *County profile: San Luis Obispo County California*. Retrieved from www.agcensus.usda.gov/.../2007/.../County.../California/cp06079.pdf
- U.S. Census. (2010). B19058. Public assistance income or food stamps/SNAP in the past 12 months for households. Retrieved from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_B19058&prodType=table
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). DP-1. Profile of general population and housing characteristics: 2010. Retrieved from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_DP_DPDP1&prodType=table
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). DP03. Selected economic characteristics. Retrieved from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_DP03&prodType=table
- U.S. Census. (2010). S2201. Food stamps/SNAP. Retrieved from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_S2201&prodType=table
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). S2401. Occupation by sex and median earnings in the past 12 months (in 2010 inflation-adjusted dollars) for the civilian employed population 16 years and over. Retrieved from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_S2401&prodType=table
- U.S Census Bureau OnTheMap. (2010). Work area profile analysis, San Luis Obispo County. Retrieved from <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2011). The HHS poverty guidelines for the remainder of 2010. Retrieved from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/10poverty.shtml>
- USDA Economic Research Service. (2011a). Briefing rooms. Food security in the United States: Definitions of hunger and food security. Retrieved from <http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodsecurity/labels.htm>
- USDA Economic Research Service. (2011b). Briefing rooms. Food security in the United States: Key statistics and graphics. Retrieved from http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodsecurity/stats_graphs.htm
- USDA, Food and Nutrition Service. (2005). *Obesity, poverty, and participation in nutrition assistance programs*. Washington, D.C.: Linz, P., Lee, M., & Bell, L. Retrieved from www.fns.usda.gov/ora/MENU/Published/NutritionEducation/Files/ObesityPovertySum.pdf
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service. (2012). Healthy hunger-free kids act of 2010. Retrieved from http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/CNR_2010.htm
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD]. (2012) Affordable housing. Retrieved from <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/>
- Wikipedia. (2012). San Luis Obispo County, California. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Luis_Obispo_County
- Winne, M., Joseph, H., & Fisher, A. (Ed.). (1997). Community food security: A guide to concept, design and implementation. Retrieved from www.foodsecurity.org/CFSguidebook1997.PDF
- Wootan, M. (2012). The healthy, hunger-free kids act: One year later. *NASN School Nurse*, 27(1), 18-19.

**HUNGRY NO MORE: A HUNGER-FREE COMMUNITY
PLAN FOR SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY**

Hungry No More!

A Hunger-Free Community Plan for San Luis Obispo County

Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County
San Luis Obispo County Food System Coalition

Acknowledgements

This plan is a project of the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County, with support from the SLO County Food System Coalition. A USDA Hunger-Free Communities Grant, awarded to the Food Bank, provided funding for this project.

The plan was created by Jenny Cadigan under the direction of Professor Kelly Main in partial fulfillment of a Master of City and Regional Planning degree at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. Her committee was chaired by Professor Kelly Main, and also included Joel Diringer, the project manager of the Hunger-Free Communities Grant, Stephanie Teaford, a member of the Hunger-Free Communities Grant Steering Committee, and Paul Wack, Professor Emeritus of City and Regional Planning and Cal Poly. Additional input was provided from the Hunger-Free Communities Grant Steering Committee, the SLO County Food System Coalition, and other community organizations.

Thank you to all those involved in the project and planning process:

The Hunger-Free Communities Grant Steering Committee

Becca Carsel
Carl Hansen
Janice Fong Wolf
Kathleen Karle
Kim Pasciuto
Jenna Smith
Stephanie Teaford

Partner Agencies:

Cal Poly Center for Sustainability
CAPSLO
Central Coast Ag Network
ECO SLO
First 5 of San Luis Obispo County
HEAL SLO
Pismo Oceano Vegetable Exchange
Sierra Club
SLO County Community Foundation
SLO County Department of Planning & Building
SLO County Department of Social Services
SLO County Farm Bureau
SLO County Office of Education
SLO County Public Health Department
SLO VEG
STRIDE
UC Cooperative Extension
United Way of San Luis Obispo County

Table of Contents

Plan Summary	p. 5
Introduction	p. 6
Hunger-Free Community Project	
County Profile	
The Hunger Situation	
Economics	
Vulnerable Populations	
About the Plan	
RECOMMENDATIONS	p. 9
Food Access	p. 10
The Issue	
SLO County Needs	
Goal, Objectives and Strategies	
Nutrition & Hunger	p. 14
The Issue	
SLO County Needs	
Goal, Objectives and Strategies	
Local Agriculture	p. 19
The Issue	
SLO County Needs	
Goal, Objectives and Strategies	
Community Resources	p. 24
The Issue	
SLO County Needs	
Goal, Objectives and Strategies	
San Luis Obispo County Food System Coalition	p. 28
The Issue	
SLO County Needs	
Goal, Objectives and Strategies	
Indicators for Success	p. 31
Glossary	p. 41
References	p. 43
Declaration of Support	p. 45

Plan Summary

1. FOOD ACCESS

Goal: All San Luis Obispo County residents have access to nutritious food.

- A. Increase the availability of healthy and nutritious food from the Food Bank and other community food resources.
- B. Raise awareness and increase utilization of food and nutrition assistance programs particularly among the most underserved populations.
- C. Increase participation in pre-school, school, after school and summer feeding programs that provide nutritious food.
- D. Develop sources of sustainable funding for food assistance programs.

2. NUTRITION & HUNGER

Goal: Improved nutrition of San Luis Obispo County residents who experience food insecurity.

- A. Increase availability of nutritious food in local communities.
- B. Encourage community institutions to prioritize healthy and local food.
- C. Make resources available to health providers to both educate patients about proper nutrition and provide appropriate referrals to food assistance.
- D. Increase education and awareness on maintaining a healthy diet.
- E. Increase access to retail outlets that provide fresh produce and nutritious food.

3. LOCAL AGRICULTURE

Goal: A sustainable local food system that is able to meet the food needs of San Luis Obispo County residents.

- A. Increase opportunities for local food processing, distribution, marketing and sales.
- B. Enhance gleaned efforts.
- C. Promote agriculture as an economic development tool.
- D. Protect and enhance food production resources (e.g. land, water, air quality) and raise public awareness of threats to productivity.

4. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Goal: Collaborative community efforts to address the root causes of hunger in San Luis Obispo County.

- A. Make ending hunger a community priority in the County.
- B. Increase use of existing programs and services that can help families meet financial, health and social needs.
- C. Expand access to low-cost healthcare and pharmaceuticals to reduce a family's dilemma of paying for food or medicine.
- D. Increase the number of head-of-household jobs, and availability and affordability of housing and transportation through partnering with existing county efforts.

5. SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FOOD SYSTEM COALITION

Goal: A vibrant SLO County Food System Coalition and an effective Hunger-Free Community Plan.

- A. Strengthen the SLO County Food System Coalition by having an engaged and effective membership and maintaining alliances with local, state and national organizations.
- B. Establish a Food System Coalition Advocacy Committee to engage in advocacy and community education around local, state and national issues.
- C. Review the Hunger-Free Community plan on an annual basis.

Introduction

Hunger-Free Community Project

The Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County was the lead agency of a USDA Hunger-Free Communities planning grant awarded in spring 2011. With this grant, the Food Bank has 1) convened a group of stakeholders to form a food policy council, the SLO County Food System Coalition, and 2) worked with community partners to conduct three studies; The Central Coast Ag Network (CCAN) produced a Food Resource Guide, and STRIDE, a Cal Poly research group, conducted a Food Security Assessment and Food Store Survey. Both the Food System Coalition and the studies have contributed to the third component of the grant, the creation of this strategic plan to address hunger and nutrition issues in San Luis Obispo (SLO) County.

County Profile

San Luis Obispo County is a rural county located on the Central Coast of California, about midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. San Luis Obispo is bordered by Monterey County to the north, Kern County to the east, Santa Barbara County to the south and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The County encompasses about 3,600 square miles of land and is home to almost 270,000 people (U.S. Census, 2010, DP-1). There are seven incorporated cities within the County and many unincorporated communities.

Approximately 83% of the population is white, and 21% are Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census, 2010, DP-1). In 2008, 83% of the population five years and older spoke English only at home, and 14% spoke Spanish only at home (Applied Survey Research, 2010). About 78% of family households are married-couple families, and the average family size is three persons (Applied Survey Research, 2010).

Tourism and agriculture are among the largest economic sectors in San Luis Obispo County. Employment data from the first quarter of 2012 reveals the rate has dropped to 8.7% (CA Employment Development Department, 2012). The median household income is about \$54,000, less than the California median household income of \$58,000 (U.S. Census, 2010, S2401). The number of households living in poverty increased 20% between 2003 and 2009 (Applied Survey Research, 2010).

The Hunger Situation

While the Central Coast of California is often viewed as an affluent and healthy place, 40,000 residents struggled to provide food for themselves in 2011. Almost half (49%) of adults are overweight or obese, and almost as many (48%) do not eat the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables (California Health Interview Survey [CHIS], 2007). With the recent recession, hunger has been an increasing problem. A growing number of people are finding themselves hungry for the first time in their lives. The number of people using Food Bank services has increased 40% in the past two years, and 90% in the past five years.

Children are disproportionately affected. While children constitute only about 19% of the County's population, they make up about 40% of the Food Bank's clients (Food Bank, 2012). Sufficient food and adequate nutrition are important for optimal child growth and development. Seniors and Hispanics are also disproportionately affected.

Food assistance programs such as CalFresh and WIC are underutilized. STRIDE's research shows that a large percentage of people that likely qualify for such programs, including individuals and families living in poverty, are not utilizing these resources. Hispanic participation in these programs is especially low.

Economics

Hunger is largely a factor of income. A correlation exists between those living in poverty and those facing food insecurity. With an economy driven by agriculture and tourism, many of the jobs in the County pay low wages. Furthermore, San Luis Obispo County has one of the most unaffordable housing markets in the nation (National Association of Home Builders, 2011). High housing costs leave residents with fewer financial resources to provide themselves (and any dependents) with other necessities such as transportation, healthcare, and food. Many families are faced with choosing between buying food and paying their rent/mortgage, medical expenses, or securing other essential resources.

Vulnerable Populations

The objective of the STRIDE Food Security Assessment was to characterize the factors associated with food insecurity among vulnerable populations in San Luis Obispo County and to gain a better understanding of hunger in the County (STRIDE, 2012). The survey was administered to over 800 community members in 54 different locations in October and November 2011. Twenty-two agencies were consulted to approximate characteristics and numbers of the County's vulnerable populations. From these consultations, "vulnerable populations" were defined as the unemployed and underemployed, families living in poverty, senior citizens, the working poor and other similar groups (STRIDE, 2012). The survey targeted these vulnerable populations, 75% of who were found to be food insecure. Findings from this survey helped shape the recommendations contained in the Plan.

About the Plan

The Hunger-Free Community Plan aims to comprehensively address the food security and nutritional needs of San Luis Obispo County's most vulnerable residents. Upon completion, this plan will be adopted by the Food System Coalition, and endorsed by many community agencies and organizations. Federal, state, and local resources will be utilized to aid in hunger relief. This is a community plan, and to effectively end hunger, it will require the work and participation of the whole community including individuals, non-profits and institutions such as schools and hospitals, along with policy changes at the government level. It will take more than food assistance programs to end hunger. The root causes of hunger must be addressed. This plan aims to build and strengthen partnerships across the community to most effectively eradicate hunger, and work towards building a more sustainable food system.

In addition to the three assessments conducted as part of the grant, data was collected from the U.S. Census, County and State agencies, the 2010 ACTION for Healthy Communities report, the California Health Interview Survey and other local, state and national organizations. The plan is organized into five sections: Food Access, Nutrition and Hunger, Local Agriculture, Community Resources, and the SLO County Food System Coalition. Each of the five areas has one goal, each goal has three to five objectives, and each objective is accompanied by a set of measurable strategies. The five sections of the plan all begin with a brief overview of the issue, and a summary of SLO County needs before providing the goal, objectives and strategies pertaining to that area. At the end of the plan is a spreadsheet containing all of the goals, objectives and strategies, with indicators, a lead agency and an estimated time frame for each strategy (short, medium or long term).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Food Access**
- **Hunger & Nutrition**
- **Local Agriculture**
- **Communnity Resources**
- **SLO County Food System Coalition**

Food Access

“Food access is about social justice, and it’s about economic vitality....Equitable food access is a corner stone for healthy communities—communities in which everyone has opportunities to participate, work, prosper, and enjoy healthy, productive lives” (Bell & Standish, 2009).

The Issue

Issues of hunger and poor nutrition have been clearly linked to limited access to fresh, affordable food (Hatfield & Gunnell, 2005). Barriers to healthy food access can be both physical and financial. Physical barriers point to poor land use and transportation decisions, and financial barriers point to economic problems. Inequitable access leads to health disparities in many communities, both urban and rural. Ironically, residents of rural communities, where agricultural production can be bountiful, are often at higher risk of hunger. Food Bank distributions, federal nutrition assistance programs and schools all play a role in food access for low-income residents. However, in order for these programs to continue, funding must be in place.

San Luis Obispo County Needs

Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County

The Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County works to alleviate hunger countywide by providing food to those in need. The Food Bank provides nutritious food directly to the public and to its many partner organizations that also distribute food. In addition, the Food Bank administers several food distribution programs. The food distributed by the Food Bank comes from a variety of sources, including businesses, individuals, farmers, supermarkets, food manufacturers, and

packing houses. Nutrition is a top priority for the Food Bank; almost half of the food distributed is fresh produce.

The level of need in San Luis Obispo County has grown tremendously in the past five years. The Food Bank served 44,000 people in 2011, a 90% increase from 2006 (Food Bank, 2012). Children are disproportionately affected; children and seniors constitute about half of the population served by the Food Bank. Further, a large percentage of Food Bank clients are Hispanic. The quantity of fresh food available for the Food Bank to distribute could be increased if incentives were provided to farmers to provide more produce. For example, farmers could sell produce unsold through conventional market outlets at a reduced rate before it spoils. Additionally, partnerships with local grocers could be expanded to obtain a greater volume of unsold food from grocery stores, and the hours distribution sites are open could be extended.

Nutrition Assistance Programs

Many residents rely on nutrition assistance programs, such as CalFresh and WIC, to help them purchase food. The Federal Food Stamp Program has been renamed SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. In California, this federal program is administered under the name of CalFresh. CalFresh helps low-income people buy food via a debit card that can only be used to purchase food items, or plants and seeds to grow food. Healthcare Childcare

The County has seen an upward trend in CalFresh cases. CalFresh data is broken down into Non-Assistance CalFresh (NACF) cases, meaning those who receive only CalFresh benefits, and Public Assistance CalFresh (PACF) cases, referring to those who receive cash assistance in addition to CalFresh. In a three-year period between the 2007-2008 Fiscal Year and the 2010-2011 Fiscal Year, NACF cases have more than doubled, and PACF cases have increased 25% (SLO County Department of Social Services, 2012).

California Food Policy Advocates report that 32,750 SLO County residents are eligible for CalFresh based on their income, but that only 9,593 of these individuals are participating in the program. This ranks SLO County 53rd out of 58 counties (with 1 having the highest participation rate of eligible individuals and 58 having the lowest).

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, more commonly known as WIC, is designed to help pregnant women, new mothers, and young children (up to five years of age) eat well and stay healthy. Data released in 2010 indicate approximately 4,630 County residents are participating in the WIC program (California Food Policy Advocates, 2010).

The STRIDE Food Security Assessment confirms that there is high awareness of food assistance programs. When survey participants were asked if they had heard of the Food Bank, CalFresh, and WIC, “yes” responses were 89%, 84% and 79% respectively. However, program use is low. Of those who had heard of these programs, 82%, 57% and 59% of the participants were currently, or had in the past utilized the Food Bank, CalFresh and WIC, respectively. This data supports a strong

need for education, outreach, and assistance with these programs. Many survey participants reported that they did not utilize food assistance programs because they believed they did not qualify, or were unsure if they qualified. The STRIDE data shows that overall, Hispanic participants were least likely to utilize any assistance programs.

Schools

About one third of San Luis Obispo County school children were consistently enrolled in the Free and Reduced Price Meal Program between 2002 and 2009. However, there was a 9% increase in enrollment between the 2008-2009 and the 2009-2010 school years. To date, about 43% (14,700) of San Luis Obispo's school children receive free or reduced priced meals (CA State Department of Education, 2012a). In the summer months when school is out of session, many children are still in need of meal assistance. In the summer of 2011, there were seven sites in the County that provided children with free nutritious breakfast, lunch, and or afternoon snacks (CA State Department of Education, 2012b).

Funding

Operating food assistance programs requires money. Finding sustainable funding sources to keep these programs running in the County will be vital. Direct cash donations through automated systems such as online banking or grocery store checkout lines could help secure funds. In addition, the Food Bank should continue to pursue grant funding from foundations and other granting organizations.

1

Goal: Access to nutritious food for all San Luis Obispo County residents.

- A. Increase the availability of healthy and nutritious food from the Food Bank and other community food resources.
 - 1. Provide incentives to local farmers to provide produce to Food Bank.
 - 2. Expand weekend and evening hours for food distribution sites.
 - 3. Improve refrigeration and storage systems in food distribution sites to increase ability to distribute perishable foods.
 - 4. Maintain and support partnerships with local grocers for the donation of surplus food.
- B. Raise awareness and increase utilization of food and nutrition assistance programs particularly among the most underserved populations.
 - 1. Expand outreach and enrollment efforts for CalFresh benefits through Department of Social Services and community partners such as family resource centers.
 - 2. Identify barriers to CalFresh enrollment at county level and advocate with County to improve outreach and simplify the application process.
 - 3. Increase outreach to the Hispanic population to increase their participation in CalFresh and WIC programs.

4. Expand outreach and education efforts on fresh food distributions including education on how to prepare produce in a healthy way.
- C. Increase participation in pre-school, school, after school and summer feeding programs that provide nutritious food.
 1. Collaborate with school districts and nonprofit partners to increase the number of feeding programs available locally for school aged children during school term and during vacation periods.
 2. Identify school districts with low utilization of school breakfast programs and encourage their expansion.
 3. Increase utilization of feeding programs such as the Child and Adult Care Food Program at family day care homes and childcare centers.
- D. Develop sources of sustainable funding for food assistance programs.
 1. Pursue direct cash donations via grocery store checkout lines and online banking systems.
 2. Promotion of annual donations and the Feed the Hunger Endowment at the SLO County Community Foundation.
 3. Collaborate with community partners to conduct more efficient fundraising drives to provide nutritious food with minimal cost.
 4. Continue to seek grant funding from foundations, local, state and federal governments, and community service organizations to support Food Bank infrastructure and products for distribution.
 5. Collaborate with coalitions such as Partnership for Excellence in Family Support to synchronize resources and leverage funding opportunities.

Nutrition & Hunger

“Without affordable fresh food options, especially fruit and vegetables, adults and children face fundamental challenges to making the healthy food choices that are essential for nutritious, balanced, diets” (Bell & Standish, 2009).

The Issue

One’s food choices have a great effect on overall health. Residents with limited financial resources often have a higher intake of unhealthy food; high caloric food is often cheaper and can stretch farther than nutritious food (i.e. a families food dollar can buy more calories of unhealthy food than of nutritious food). Thus, it is not uncommon for those who face hunger to also be overweight or obese (Food Research and Action Center, 2010). One’s diet can also influence their risk of other health conditions and diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, some cancers (primarily colon and breast cancer), osteoporosis, and hypertension diseases (National Cancer Institute, n.d). Unhealthy eating habits are a primary risk factor for five of the top ten causes of death in California (Public Health Law and Policy & Raimi and Associates, 2008). Residents living in neighborhoods underserved by grocery stores or dominated by convenience stores and fast food outlets may find it more difficult to obtain healthy meals, especially if they do not, or cannot drive.

A large component of a healthy diet is eating enough fruits and vegetables. A high intake of fruits and vegetables is important for optimal child growth, weight management, and chronic disease prevention. Eating five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables a day as part of a healthy, active lifestyle reduces the risk of diet related diseases (National Cancer Institute, n.d). Reaching the goal of

increased nutrition will require making nutritious choices more available, as well as increasing education on the benefits of healthy eating.

San Luis Obispo County Needs

Diet & Diet Related Disease

The California Health Interview Survey indicates that nearly half of San Luis Obispo County residents do not eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, and the 2010 ACTION study found that only one-third of San Luis Obispo County teens self reported getting the daily recommendation of five or more fruits and vegetables. In 2007, almost half (49%) of adults in San Luis Obispo were overweight or obese (CHIS, 2007). In 2008, about 40% of children 5 to 19 years old were at risk of becoming overweight or were already overweight, putting them at greater risk to becoming obese later in life (Applied Survey Research, 2010).

Participants in STRIDE's Food Security Assessment were asked to report on their consumption habits. Emphasis was placed on fruits and vegetables, and soda and snacks. On average, participants consumed fruits and vegetables (including fresh, frozen, and canned) twice a day. About 34% of participants reported eating fruits and vegetables less than once per day, and another 11% ate fruits and vegetables 1-2 times a day. Only 6% reported eating fruits and vegetables more than 5 times per day (STRIDE, 2012).

Participants reported consuming snacks and soda less frequently than fruits and vegetables. On average, participants consumed snacks and soda 1.7 times per day. While 12% reported never consuming snacks and soda, 33% reported consuming these items less than once per day, 31% consumed these items 1-2 times a day, and 24% reported consuming snacks and soda at least three times per day (STRIDE, 2012).

The Availability of Healthy Food

In general, people are not consuming enough fruits and vegetables. To increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, these foods need to become more available to greater populations. Eating healthy needs to be an option for all residents. Healthy food can be obtained from a variety of sources, but some barriers do exist.

Shopping at farmers markets is a great way to get fresh flavor packed produce and support local growers. There are twenty-one farmers markets operating in the County, however, none of them are equipped with EBT machines to accept CalFresh benefits. This may prevent low-income residents from being able to take advantage of purchasing fresh food from local farmers markets.

Community gardens provide residents who may not otherwise have the space an opportunity to grow their own produce. There are sixteen community gardens in the County, but many of them have waiting lists. Community gardens are relatively inexpensive to start, and can be a great use of underutilized land, whether temporary or permanent. Food can be also be produced onsite at workplaces

through small barrel gardens, located on school grounds (school gardens), incorporated into affordable housing projects, and in residents' backyards.

Institutional Purchasing

In addition to encouraging healthy nutrition at the individual level, healthy local food should be promoted at the institutional level. Schools, hospitals and jails all purchase great quantities of food for residents. Teachers, physicians, non-profit organizations and government officials are positioned to promote the importance of a healthy diet.

HEAL-SLO, a coalition focused on increasing healthful eating and physical activity, is advocating for the Board of Supervisors to adopt a "buy local" policy for the County. While the County primarily only purchases food for the County jail and Juvenile Hall, this policy is symbolic of the County's commitment to supporting the local economy by investing in local agriculture, and provides leadership in the buy local movement. Further, a buy local policy improves the traceability of food, promotes healthy eating, and reduces carbon emissions. Each city in the County should consider adopting a "buy local" policy to support local growers and promote fresh foods.

Every school district participating in the National School Lunch Program or other child nutrition program is required by federal law to enact a school wellness policy for all schools under its jurisdiction (Center for Disease Control, 2012). As a result of this federal policy, local schools have developed initiatives to promote healthful nutrition and physical activity. The Wellness Policies of San Luis Obispo County school districts offer an opportunity to implement programs and policies to more aggressively integrate healthy eating and nutrition education into the lives of youth.

Nutrition Education and Outreach

There are several nutrition education efforts already in place. The San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services and the Public Health Department received a USDA SNAP-ED grant to increase nutrition education services. This grant will allow both agencies to collaboratively educate CalFresh participants to make healthier choices with their limited budget. Additionally, the University of California Cooperative Extension has a CalFresh Nutrition Education Program. The program provides evidenced-based nutrition education to CalFresh recipients and other low-income individuals and families in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties (UC Cooperative Education, 2012). The program also specializes in creating healthy cultures in low-income schools. Efforts should be made to expand or mimic these efforts to reach a greater audience.

Healthy Food Retail

There is growing awareness of the relationship between public health and the built environment. Land use, transportation and economic development decisions can be instrumental in public health outcomes. Specifically, they can shape neighborhood food access and the retail food environment. Low-income neighborhoods often suffer from disproportionately lower access to retail

outlets that sell fresh produce and higher concentrations of fast food outlets and convenience stores (Public Health Law and Policy & Raimi and Associates, 2008).

The Food Store survey conducted by STRIDE revealed that groceries tend to be more expensive on the coast and less expensive in the north part of the County, that fruits and vegetables were harder to find than snacks and soda, and that healthier varieties (e.g. whole wheat bread, lean meat) were more expensive than less healthy alternatives. However, healthy food access has not been studied at the neighborhood level in San Luis Obispo County.

Because the County is predominantly rural, there are likely to be underserved areas that lack easy access to fresh nutritious food. Residents in rural areas with limited access to transportation rely heavily on corner stores for their food shopping, which generally sell packaged foods and beverages of little nutritional value, alcohol and tobacco products, with few, if any fresh food items. Creating new farmers markets, encouraging healthy mobile vending, and investing in healthy corner store initiatives are all methods of increasing the availability of healthy food in these underserved areas.

2

Goal: Improved nutrition of San Luis Obispo County residents who experience food insecurity.

- A. Increase availability of nutritious food in local communities.
 - 1. Provide greater opportunities for food insecure populations to shop at farmers markets by enabling the use of CalFresh benefits and WIC vouchers, and expand markets to underserved areas through innovative models such as mobile markets, family resource center and school-based markets and swap meets.
 - 2. Utilize Central Coast Ag Network's inventory of agriculturally viable publicly owned lands to identify locations for community gardens on existing parkland, public easements, rights-of-way and schoolyards, and support their development with municipalities, schools and community organizations.
 - 3. Create opportunities for onsite food production, such as gardens or green roof in affordable housing projects, and barrel gardens at workplaces, family resource and child care centers and places of worship.¹
 - 4. Develop joint use agreements for community kitchens to allow communal food preparation and preservation.
 - 5. Identify regulatory barriers for food producers, processors and distributors that unreasonably restrict the availability of nutritious food for food insecure populations.
- B. Encourage community institutions to prioritize healthy and local food.
 - 1. Educate local jurisdictions and community institutions on "buy local" policies and advocate for their adoption.

¹ The Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo is working on an affordable housing project, which incorporates a permaculture element into the project design. Residents will be able to grow healthy food onsite. This will be a pilot project, but if successful, should be mimicked to some extent with all affordable housing sites.

2. Advocate for school districts to implement school gardens and with a nutrition education component.
 3. Provide educational materials and menu recommendations for healthy meals to be served at large-scale feeding sites such as homeless shelters, senior centers and hospitals.
 4. Work with childcare centers and family day care homes to promote wellness policies, prioritize nutrition, purchase local healthy foods, participate in food programs and create gardening programs.
 5. Work with school districts to ensure that school wellness policies prioritize nutrition through classroom education, school gardens and school lunch and breakfast programs.
- C. Make resources available to health providers to both educate patients about proper nutrition and provide appropriate referrals to food assistance.
1. Develop and distribute a resource list for health providers on food sources for low-income communities.
 2. Provide continuing education workshops for physicians and health providers to educate on proper nutrition and how to discuss it with patients.
 3. Create sample grocery lists and weekly menus of nutritious meals for doctors to “prescribe” for their patients.
- D. Increase education and awareness on maintaining a healthy diet.
1. Disseminate information about healthful eating habits through food distribution sites, low-income schools, childcare programs, religious organizations and family centers.
 2. Offer classes to CalFresh recipients and Food Bank clients on healthy low budget cooking and smart shopping.
- E. Increase access to retail outlets that provide fresh produce and nutritious food.
1. Encourage grocery stores and other retail markets in underserved areas to provide fresh produce by offering development and loan incentives, linking stores to local produce vendors, and through Healthy Corner Store projects.²
 2. Educate County and city governments on the benefits of a Healthy Mobile Vending Ordinance and encourage adoption of a model ordinance.³

² Healthy Corner Store projects seek to work with small local grocers to improve the availability, quality, and affordability of healthy foods. More information can be found at <http://www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/products/healthy-corner-stores>.

³ Healthy Mobile Vending ordinances legalize street vending of healthy food (e.g. Uncut and unprocessed produce) and encourage it through incentives such as reduced permit fees. More information can be found at <http://www.nplanonline.org/childhood-obesity/products/healthy-mobile-vending-policies>.

Local Agriculture

“Agriculture should support local economic development, address poverty and hunger, and support the sustainable management of natural resources” (Lawrence et al., 2010.)

The Issue

Over the past fifty years, food production has increased in scale and efficiency. The modern agricultural industry has revolutionized production and processing technologies, resulting in a more consistent and reliable supply of food, and has made massive economic contributions. However, the current industrial food system is characterized by high-energy usage and waste, consumers are more distanced than ever from their food, and farmers throughout the nation are often among the food insecure population. Today’s food system is in need of more farms, farmers, and farm income (McIntyre, 2012).

Increased investments in local agriculture can help reconnect a community with healthy foods while supporting small farmers, ranchers and fishers. A sustainable food supply is needed to assure food security long term. Thus, protecting agricultural land and food production resources, making food production economically viable, and cultivating the next generation of food producers is essential. A sustainable local food system that is able to meet the needs of residents can be accomplished by increasing the availability of high-quality, affordable food within a community, offering small farmers increased market opportunities, strengthening economic and social ties between food producers and consumers, and channeling a larger share of residents’ food spending back to the local economy (Central Coast Ag Network, 2011).

San Luis Obispo County Needs

Expanding Market Opportunities

San Luis Obispo County produces enough food to feed every resident of the County seven and a half pounds of food a day (Settevendemie, 2012). However, the vast majority of this food is consumed outside the County. While it would not be advantageous to keep all of the food within the County (local farmers are supported by exporting their harvest), efforts should be made to retain a greater share of the food for local consumers. To support the viability of farming in San Luis Obispo County, market opportunities need to be increased.

Farm to School and Farm to Institution programs emphasize local purchasing and establish connections between food producers and institutions. These programs are beneficial to the food producer by providing new markets, and schools and institutions benefit from fresh local food. The Farm to School movement is gaining momentum in San Luis Obispo County schools; at least half of the schools in San Luis Obispo County's fourteen districts participate in Farm to School activities and programs that promote (Kiley, 2010). Farm to School programs provide a potentially large and reliable market for local farmers, but farmers still have concerns about whether schools will commit to buying what they grow, and whether they can grow enough food to meet the demands. Additionally, food service directors may prefer to get all of their food from one source, rather than several local farms.

A common challenge small farmers face is a lack of distribution infrastructure. Food hubs aggregate the processing and distribution of food in a community, enabling farmers to capitalize on larger volume market opportunities such as restaurants, grocery stores, schools, hospitals and universities. In 2007, Coast Grown received a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant to form the Coast Grown Cooperative of 18 independent farms and ranches along the Central Coast and to build the first mobile harvest unit in California (Barham, et al., 2012). Efforts should be made to support the development of this food hub.

Gleaning

Gleaning is the collection of leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or from fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. GleanSLO, a program operated by the Food Bank, has expanded this definition to include the collection of surplus produce from backyards and gardens of community residents (GleanSLO, n.d.). In 2011, GleanSLO gleaned and donated 38,000 pounds of produce from local farms (GleanSLO, n.d.). However, there are many crops that do not get gleaned, and are left on the farm to rot. A system, such as a gleaning hotline, could streamline the process of connecting gleaners with available produce. Additionally, "Plant an Extra Row", or "Grow a Row" programs are an easy way to increase the volume of fresh local produce available to the Food Bank and other distribution sites. As their name implies, these programs encourage food producers, whether backyard gardeners or large-scale farmers, to plant an extra row of crops to be donated.

Economic Development

Agriculture is a major component of the County's economy, and should be promoted as an economic development tool. In 2011, total animal, field, fruit and nut, nursery and vegetable products produced in San Luis Obispo County were valued at \$736,206,000, a record year for the County (SLO County Department of Ag, 2012). However, more than half of farm owners report a primary occupation other than farming (Crabb, 2012). This data indicates economic difficulty in farming as a single occupation. The Economic Element of the County's General Plan contains a policy (policy 2f) that reads, Take action to help agriculture remain economically viable (SLO County Economic Advisory Committee and the Department of Planning and Building, 1999). Strategies proposed in this plan also seek to improve the economic viability of farming.

Both the County and Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC) have acknowledged the importance of agriculture to economic development in their identification of economic clusters. The Economic Element of General Plan identifies an ag-based cluster (agricultural services, biotechnology, and food processing) as one of five recommended sectors suggested for business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts. EVC has also developed an economic strategy in which they have identified six business clusters that represents 90% of the regional job growth in the County since 1995 (EVC, 2011). One of these clusters is "Uniquely SLO County", which aims "to position, brand and promote San Luis Obispo County as a choice destination for regional, national, and global visitors" (EVC, 2011). Within the Uniquely SLO County cluster, three sub-groups have been established: Food, Wine, and Tourism. These formal efforts can be supported and enhanced through strategies that attract local food processors, wholesalers, and distributors (e.g. development incentives such as streamlined permits or tax breaks).

Farmers are essential to food security. Without people dedicated to food production, there is no food for our communities to eat. The average age of the principal farm operator in San Luis Obispo County is 59 years old (U.S. Census of Agriculture, 2007). In order for farming to continue at a rate that is able to sustain and feed us, a younger generation of farmers must be cultivated. Agricultural education programs, farm apprenticeships, and efforts to match young interested food producers with available land need to be cultivated. Agriculture as a profession needs to be promoted and supported among the millennial generation.

Resource Conservation

The County can strategically exercise its authority of land use and zoning decisions in unincorporated areas of the County to protect open space and agricultural land. Another policy under goal one of the Economic Element reads, Protect agricultural resources that make San Luis Obispo County an attractive place for economic development (Policy 1f). Data from the 2002 and the 2007 Census of Agriculture indicates that San Luis Obispo County saw an increase (20%) in both the number of farms and in total farm land (4%) measured in acres. About 65% of all County land is in farms, and 68% of all farmland is pastureland (Crabb, 2012). The Williamson Act of 1965 provides an incentive for landowners to keep their land in agricultural use in exchange for lower property tax breaks, and the Right to Farm Ordinance protects agricultural operation from certain nuisance lawsuits

(SLO County Economic Advisory Committee and the Department of Planning and Building, 1999). As the County's population grows, it will be increasingly paramount to protect agricultural land and preserve water and air quality.

As previously stated, the Economic Element of the County's General Plan contains a policy focused on the viability of agriculture. One program (program 2f3) under this policy supports the concept of visitor-oriented agricultural uses (agri-tourism activities such as wine tasting rooms, ranch vacations, horseback riding, bed-and-breakfasts, etc). Another program (program 2f4) supports the expansion of small business uses on ag land to supplement income. Ancillary activities on ag land can be a great source of supplemental income for small farmers, especially in an area that already has a high tourist population. However, it is important that non-farm activities do not impede the agricultural production of the participating farm, or neighboring farms. For example, tourist activities can lead to increased traffic, which leads to increased air pollution.

3

Goal: A sustainable local food system that is able to meet the food needs of San Luis Obispo County residents.

- A. Increase opportunities for local food processing, distribution, marketing and sales.
 - 1. Collaborate with schools and institutions to implement Farm to School and Farm to Institution programs to increase the purchase of locally grown ingredients.
 - 2. Partner with local agricultural organizations to support the development of a regional food hub network to increase the efficiency of food distribution and increase markets for small and mid size producers.
 - 3. Develop programs for farmers to “adopt” a local community institution (e.g. childcare center, family resource center or school) to distribute extra farm products and provide an educational opportunity.
- B. Enhance gleaning efforts.
 - 1. Establish a hotline or website to easily link produce available for gleaning with gleaners.
 - 2. Work with growers to develop a “Plant an Extra Row” program.
 - 3. Encourage individuals to donate surplus food from backyard gardens.
- C. Promote agriculture as an economic development tool.
 - 1. Partner with community agricultural and economic development partners to brand and market quality local food production.
 - 2. Support ACTION for Healthy Communities in the creation of a folio regarding the economic impact of local agriculture.
 - 3. Attract and retain local food processing/ wholesaling/ distribution companies through economic development incentives (e.g. streamlined permits or tax breaks)
 - 4. Cultivate the next generation of food producers through school programs, youth job training and community efforts that promote farming, ranching and fishing as professions.

- D. Protect and enhance food production resources (e.g. land, water, air quality) and raise public awareness of threats to productivity.
 - 1. Preserve ag land and limit commercial uses on ag land through public education and advocacy on issues such as “right to farm,” Williamson Act and land use planning.
 - 2. Conduct local Food Shed Assessment

Community Resources

“The root cause of hunger is a lack of adequate purchasing power in millions of households. When individuals and families do not have the resources to buy enough food, the result is hunger” (Ayres, et al., 2008).

The Issue

Emergency food sources and federal food programs alone will not end hunger. The root causes of hunger and food insecurity must be addressed. Though it is not the sole factor, a lack of financial resources is a major underlying reason explaining why people struggle with food security (Ayres et al., 2008). As such, there is a large correlation between those living in poverty, and those who are food insecure. Those struggling to sufficiently feed themselves and their families are often struggling to provide themselves with other basic resources such as housing and healthcare. Residents with limited financial resources must weigh the critical trade offs of how they spend their money. The more money an individual chooses to spend on one essential resource, the less money he or she has to pay for others.

In addition to individual resources, community resources must also be inventoried and utilized. Collaboration between non-profits, government agencies and institutions will be required to effectively alleviate hunger and related social issues. Ending hunger must be a priority communitywide.

San Luis Obispo County Needs

The local job market coupled with high cost of living aggravates the hunger situation in San Luis Obispo County. In order to alleviate hunger, wages and the costs of other essential needs must also be evaluated. This is an arduous

task and will require collaboration with many other community agencies and organizations that are working to address these related issues. Additionally, outreach to these organizations and to the public at large, aimed at illustrating the interconnectedness of jobs, housing, healthcare, and hunger will be critical.

Income & Economy

Located in a rural and coastal area, San Luis Obispo County's economy is driven by agriculture and tourism, which yields a high number of low-paying jobs. In fact, 28% of all jobs in the County earn less than \$1,250 per month, a greater percentage than in California as a whole (U.S. Census OnTheMap, 2010). An income of \$1,250 a month equates to \$15,000 a year, which is just above the federal poverty line. In the STRIDE Food Security Assessment, income was the most notable factor influencing food security. Approximately 60% of the surveyed population was living at or below poverty level, and of those in poverty, 84% were found to be food insecure (STRIDE, 2012). Countywide, the poverty rate is 14% (U.S. Census, 2010, DP03).

The Self-Sufficiency Standard for California is an alternative way to measure a family's ability to meet basic needs. This standard provides a more complete picture than the federal poverty level by taking into account family composition and the geographic cost of living (including housing, food, childcare, medical, transportation and other necessary costs). The Self Sufficiency Standard recognizes that the age of children affects their costs. Since the cost of living in San Luis Obispo County is high, there is a large discrepancy between the federal poverty line and the Self-Sufficiency Standard; for one adult and two children, the poverty line is at \$18,530, the Self-Sufficiency Standard in San Luis Obispo County is \$57,256. An adult may be earning an income well above the poverty line, but still struggling to make ends meet. In this scenario, the adult would need to be working a full time job earning over \$27 an hour to sufficiently provide basic needs for his or her family. This is more than the equivalent of three minimum wage jobs.

Housing

The high cost of housing in San Luis Obispo County is a major contributor to the large discrepancy between the poverty line and the Self-Sufficiency Standard. According to the National Association of Home Builders (2012), the San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles metropolitan area has the 9th least affordable housing market in the nation. The Census reports that 36% of renters in the County have severe housing cost burden (U.S. Census, 2010). This is a higher percentage than Los Angeles, San Jose, San Francisco and New York City.

According to a 2010 survey, almost one quarter of SLO County residents are paying more than half of their income on housing (Applied Survey Research, 2010). The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has set a standard for housing affordability –no more than 30% of one's income should be spent on housing. As HUD explains, "Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care" (HUD, 2012).

The average rental rate in the County increased 39% between 2002 and 2010. A two-bedroom rental averaged \$1,230 per month in 2010 (Applied Survey Research, 2010). This exceeds the Fair Market Rent rate (which is the rate the Housing Authority will pay for rentals) of \$1,160. STRIDE's Food Security Assessment found that 52% of the survey population "sometimes" or "often" had to choose between buying food and paying rent or mortgage. This problem affected 62% of Hispanic households, compared to 40% of white households

Healthcare

When asked how often STRIDE survey participants faced having to choose between buying food and paying for medical expenses, responses were similar; over half of survey respondents had to choose between buying food and paying medical expenses. According to a 2010 survey, 84% of County residents have health insurance, down from 89% in 2006 (Applied Survey Research, 2010). Only 47% of Spanish-speaking parents are insured. Of those without insurance, 74% say it is too expensive and they cannot afford it.

Transportation

Transportation can be another significant cost, whether it is on car payments, auto insurance and gas, or regular public transportation. The Self Sufficiency Standard estimate of average monthly transportation costs for one adult in San Luis Obispo County is \$258. This exceeds the monthly food costs of \$236, and is the third greatest expense behind housing and taxes (Insight, 2011).

Community Organizations and Leadership

While the Food System Coalition will play an instrumental role in alleviating hunger in the County, other organizations will be needed as well. As a community plan, it will need widespread support and endorsement. Outreach to other agencies and community organizations involved in nutrition, health, housing, social services, agriculture, and government will be a part of plan implementation.

4

Goal: Collaborative community efforts to address the root causes of hunger in San Luis Obispo County.

- A. Make ending hunger a community priority in the County.
 - 1. Reach out to community agencies, coalitions and groups, and local government to review this plan, identify their role, adopt action steps and endorse an anti-hunger campaign.
 - 2. Educate the community about the state of hunger and malnutrition in SLO County through a multi-agency PR Campaign to explain interconnectedness of poverty, hunger and jobs.
 - 3. Collaborate with other organizations combating poverty, homelessness, hunger and lack of healthcare to advocate for economic and social justice.
- B. Increase use of existing programs and services that can help families meet financial, health and social needs.
 - 1. Partner with California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) to implement a program for students to intern at health, social services

- and food programs to connect low income persons with community services.¹
2. Work with agencies such as Family Resource Centers, Head Start and Food Bank to conduct Earned Income Tax Credit outreach.
- C. Expand access to low-cost healthcare and pharmaceuticals to reduce a family's dilemma of paying for food or medicine.
1. Increase publicity about and help connect people to health coverage programs (Medi-Cal, CMSP, Healthy Families), Community Health Centers and no-cost health clinics (SLO Noor Clinic) for healthcare.
 2. Educate food insecure persons about programs for filling pharmacy needs such as Pharmaceutical Alliance and Community Health Centers pharmacy.
- D. Increase the number of head-of-household jobs, and availability and affordability of housing and transportation through partnering with existing county efforts.
1. Support and collaborate with Homeless Services Oversight Council, Housing Trust Fund, housing authorities, Peoples' Self Help Housing and the new SLO County Department of Social Services (DSS) homeless services coordinator.
 2. Work with Economic Vitality Corporation, chambers of commerce, large employers, and municipal planning agencies to increase the number of well-paying jobs in the County.
 3. Support and advocate for improved public transit and reduced transit fares for CalFresh and WIC recipients to increase access to food, healthcare and social services.

¹ E.g. Heath Leads (healthleadsusa.org)

SLO County Food System Coalition

"Imagine: Diverse leaders in our County working together, learning from one another, studying our uniqueness and creating a county that makes the most of its abundant resources in a responsible way to provide access to healthy food locally, especially for those who may not have access now" (Hansen, 2012).

The Issue

A food policy council (FPC), as the term implies, is a policy advocacy mechanism meant to promote the objectives of community food security (Winne, Joseph, & Fisher, 1997). Food policy councils and commissions have been developed in several cities as a catalyst for food policy advocacy. Typically made up of stakeholders from a variety of fields, FPCs are often formed through city or county resolution, and hence are located within the public sector. FPCs usually have a volunteer "board", few have full time staff persons, and they may be located within a city department (e.g. Public Health), established as an independent commission, or organized as a hybrid private/public organization (established by an ordinance of city council, but function as a non-profit) (Winne, Joseph, & Fisher, 1997).

San Luis Obispo County Needs

The Hunger-Free Communities grant stipulates the awarded agency must work with their local food policy council to create the strategic plan, and if there is no local food policy council, they must create one. San Luis Obispo County did not have a food policy council at the time the grant was awarded. Thus, the Food Bank and the Grant Steering Committee began convening a group of interested stakeholders to start forming a food policy council. This unique version of a food policy council, known as the SLO County Food System Coalition has been meeting monthly since June 2011.

About the Food System Coalition

The Food System Coalition is to be a collaborative network, which brings many individuals and organizations together. Projects conducted from any of the partner organizations will be supported by the Coalition, and additionally, projects will form out of the Coalition. It has been stressed that the Coalition should support, but not duplicate existing efforts to improve the County's food system.

Mission and Goals

The mission of the SLO County Food System Coalition is, "To promote a sustainable food system that is equitable, profitable, resilient, and health promoting in the county of San Luis Obispo" (SLO County Food System Coalition, 2012). Goals include:

- Create a forum that brings people together from all sectors of the food system to generate new relationships and cross learning.
- Promote policies and programs that increase food security and social and economic opportunity for food producers, distributors and consumers in San Luis Obispo County.
- Support education and programs that encourage San Luis Obispo residents to make choices for a healthy life.
- Serve as a resource to the community to assist in solution-oriented local food system development programs and projects.

Community Partners

The Food System Coalition will provide a forum for people to bring new ideas, and for collaborative efforts to conjoin. Members of the Coalition come with a broad range of interests and expertise. The Food System Coalition aims to have representatives from all segments of the local food system. Government, businesses, education, faith and non-profit sectors may be represented.

Advocacy

The Coalition seeks to educate community leaders as well as the general public on food system issues, offer public policy ideas, improve coordination between existing programs and efforts, and start new programs that aim to improve the food system. In addition to building partnerships within the County, it will be important serve an active role with the formation of the California Food Policy Council, and engage with state and federal movements. Advocacy work will be critical in achieving the Coalition's goals, including hunger relief. Establishing an advocacy committee within the Coalition will create a group of individuals focused on advocating at the local, state, and federal levels.

Review of Plan

To help ensure success of the plan, the Food System Coalition will need to monitor the progress of plan implementation. Indicators have been established for each strategy, which can be found beginning on page 31. These indicators will help monitor implementation and determine the success of the plan. Annual measurement will be conducted, and compared to baseline measurements to track progress. Annual review of the plan may lead to slight alterations of the plan or indicators. These findings will be published in an annual report and shared with the community.

5

Goal: A vibrant SLO County Food System Coalition and an effective Hunger-Free Community Plan.

- A. Strengthen the SLO County Food System Coalition by having an engaged and effective membership and maintaining alliances with local, state and national organizations.
 - 1. Ensure the agricultural sectors are adequately represented within the Food System Coalition, and that the Coalition is working towards agricultural issues.
 - 2. Align with statewide and national organizations that advocate for Food System Coalition goals of sustainable local food systems.
 - 3. Pursue funding to ensure sufficient administrative support for the Food System Coalition to continue its operations.
- B. Establish a Food System Coalition Advocacy Committee to engage in advocacy and community education around local, state and national issues.
 - 1. Research and recommend positions to the Food System Coalition on state and national issues such as the Farm Bill, child nutrition and SNAP.
 - 2. Research and recommend positions to FSC on local issues such as agricultural preservation, regulations to increase the availability of nutritious food, economic development, and public program participation.
 - 3. Host FSC forums on public policy issues that impact access to nutritious food in San Luis Obispo County.
- C. Review the Hunger-Free Community plan on an annual basis.
 - 1. Establish indicators with community organizations for tracking progress on plan implementation.
 - 2. Review strategies for possible modifications.
 - 3. Provide an annual report to the community on progress in eliminating hunger in San Luis Obispo County.

Indicators for Success

Key

Time Frame

Short: To begin within the next year

Medium: To begin within two years

Long: To begin within five years

Lead Agencies

Cal Poly Center for Sustainability

CAPSLO: Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County

CCAN: Central Coast Ag Network

Central Coast Ag Cooperative

DSS: County Department of Social Services

Farm Bureau

Food Bank

FSC: SLO County Food System Coalition

GleanSLO

HEAL-SLO: Healthy Eating, Active Living – San Luis Obispo

PEFS: Partnership for Excellence in Family Support

PHD: County Public Health Department

PBD: County Planning and Building Department

UC Coop Extension Master Gardeners

UC Coop Extension Nutrition Education Program

Goal 1: All San Luis Obispo County residents have access to nutritious food.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
A. Increase the availability of healthy and nutritious food from the Food Bank and other community food resources.			
1. Provide incentives to local farmers to provide produce to Food Bank.	▪ Pounds of food received from local farmers	Medium	Food Bank
2. Expand weekend and evening hours of food distribution sites.	▪ Number of food distribution sites with extended hours	Medium	FSC, Food Bank
3. Improve refrigeration and storage systems in food distribution sites to increase ability to distribute perishable foods.	▪ Total pounds of perishable food distributed	Medium	Food Bank
4. Maintain and support partnerships with local grocers for the donation of surplus food.	▪ Pounds of food donated from retail outlets ▪ Number of retail outlets donating annually	Short	FSC, Food Bank
B. Raise awareness and increase utilization of food and nutrition assistance programs particularly among the most underserved populations.			

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
1. Expand outreach and enrollment efforts for CalFresh benefits through Department of Social Services and community partners such as family resource centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CalFresh participation rate as measured by Participation Access Index 	Short	DSS, Food Bank
2. Identify barriers to CalFresh enrollment at county level and advocate with the County to improve outreach and simplify the application process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CalFresh participation rate as measured by Participation Access Index 	Medium	DSS, Food Bank, FSC
3. Increase outreach to Hispanic population to increase their participation in CalFresh and WIC programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hispanic participation rate in CalFresh and WIC programs 	Medium	DSS, Food Bank, PEFS
4. Expand outreach and education on fresh food distributions including education on how to prepare produce in a healthy way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation and distribution of education materials. Adult obesity rate 	Short	FSC, Food Bank, PHD
C. Increase participation in pre-school, school, after school and summer feeding programs that provide nutritious food.			
1. Collaborate with school districts and nonprofit partners to increase the number of feeding programs available locally for school aged children during school term and during vacation periods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total number and type of feeding programs available to San Luis Obispo County children. Participation rate of school districts in school breakfast and lunch programs 	Medium	FSC, Food Bank
2. Identify school districts with low utilization of school breakfast programs and encourage their expansion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate of school breakfast utilization among each school district 	Short	FSC
3. Increase utilization of feeding programs such as the Child and Adult Care Food Program at family day care homes and childcare centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of childcare providers enrolled in food programs Number of adult day care homes enrolled in federal feeding programs 	Short	CAPSLO
D. Develop sources of sustainable funding for food assistance programs.			
1. Pursue direct cash donations via grocery store checkout lines and online banking systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of direct donation mechanisms established Total dollars donated via direct donation 	Short	Food Bank

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
2. Promote annual donations and the Feed the Hunger Endowment at the SLO County Community Foundation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total dollars donated to Feed the Hungry Endowment 	Short	Food Bank, FSC
3. Collaborate with community partners to conduct more efficient food drives that provide nutritious food with minimal cost.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of pounds of food received from food drive and cost of collection 	Short	Food Bank
4. Continue to seek grant funding from foundations, local, state and federal governments, and community service organizations to support Food Bank infrastructure and products for distribution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dollars in grant awards Number and types of funders 	Short	Food Bank, FSC
5. Collaborate with coalitions such as Partnership for Excellence in Family Support to synchronize resources and leverage funding opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of funding efforts conducted in collaboration with other Coalitions or groups. 	Medium	FSC, PEFS

Goals 2: Improved nutrition of San Luis Obispo County residents who experience food insecurity.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
A. Increase availability of nutritious food in local communities.			
1. Provide greater opportunities for food insecure populations to shop at farmers markets by enabling the use of CalFresh benefits and WIC vouchers, and expand markets to underserved areas through innovative models such as mobile markets, family resource center and school-based markets and swap meets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of farmers markets accepting SNAP and WIC benefits Dollar amount of purchases made with SNAP and WIC benefits at farmers markets Number of new farmers markets or produce vending operations 	Medium	FSC, DSS
2. Utilize Central Coast Ag Network's inventory of agriculturally viable publicly owned lands to identify locations for community gardens on existing parkland, public easements, rights-of-way and schoolyards, and support their development with municipalities, schools and community organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of potential sites for community gardens Number of community gardens in County 	Short	CCAN

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
3. Create opportunities for onsite food production, such as gardens or green roof in affordable housing projects, and barrel gardens at workplaces, family resource and childcare centers and places of worship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of affordable housing projects with onsite food production Number of barrel garden sites 	Medium	FSC, UC Coop Extension Master Gardeners
4. Develop joint use agreements for community kitchens to allow communal food preparation and preservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of joint use agreements for kitchens Number of kitchens available for schools, feeding programs, etc. 	Medium	FSC, CCAN
5. Identify regulatory barriers for food producers, processors and distributors that unreasonably restrict the availability of nutritious food for vulnerable populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of regulatory barriers identified and addressed by FSC advocacy 	Medium	FSC
B. Encourage community institutions to prioritize healthy and local food.			
1. Educate local jurisdictions and community institutions on “buy local” policies and advocate for their adoption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of jurisdictions with a buy local policy 	Short	PHD, HEAL SLO
2. Advocate for school districts to implement school gardens with a nutrition education component.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of school gardens 	Medium	FSC
3. Provide educational materials and menu recommendations for healthy meals to be served at large-scale feeding sites such as homeless shelters, senior centers, and hospitals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of feeding sites utilizing healthy menu recommendations 	Short	FSC, PHD
4. Work with childcare centers and family day care homes to promote wellness policies, prioritize nutrition, purchase local healthy foods, participate in food programs and create gardening programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of childcare and family day care centers with wellness policies Number of childcare and family day care centers with serving locally sourced food. Number of childcare and family care centers with gardening programs Number of childcare and family day care centers participating in federal food programs 	Medium	CAPSLO
5. Work with school districts to ensure that school wellness policies prioritize nutrition through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of school wellness policies adopted with a nutrition component 	Medium	FSC

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
classroom education, school gardens and school lunch and breakfast programs.			
C. Make resources available to health providers to both educate patients about proper nutrition and provide appropriate referrals to food assistance.			
1. Develop and distribute a resource list for health providers on food sources for low-income communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation and distribution of resource list Number of health providers receiving and utilizing resource list 	Medium	PHD
2. Provide continuing education workshops for physicians and health providers to educate on proper nutrition and how to discuss it with patients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of physicians and health providers participating in continuing education workshops 	Long	FSC, PHD
3. Create sample grocery lists and weekly menus of nutritious meals for doctors to “prescribe” for their patients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of physician offices receiving menus and lists Number of physicians writing “prescriptions” 	Medium	FSC, PHD
D. Increase education and awareness on maintaining a healthy diet.			
1. Disseminate information about healthful eating habits through food distribution sites, low-income schools, childcare programs, religious organizations and family centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of food sites, low-income schools, childcare programs, religious organizations and family centers disseminating materials on nutrition 	Short	UC Coop Extension Nutrition Education Program, Food Bank
2. Offer classes for CalFresh recipients and Food Bank clients on healthy low budget cooking and smart shopping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participants in cooking classes 	Short	PHD, DSS
E. Increase access to retail outlets that provide fresh produce and nutritious food.			
1. Encourage grocery stores and other retail markets in underserved areas to provide fresh produce by offering development and loan incentives, linking stores to local produce vendors, and through Healthy Corner Store projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of retail outlets offering fresh produce Number of retail outlets offering produce from SLO County farms 	Long	PBD
2. Educate County and city governments on the benefits of a Healthy Mobile Vending Ordinance and encourage adoption of a model ordinance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of jurisdictions who have adopted a Healthy Mobile Vending Ordinance 	Medium	FSC, PBD

Goal 3: A sustainable local food system that is able to meet the food needs of San Luis Obispo County residents.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
A. Increase opportunities for local food processing, distribution, marketing and sales.			
1. Collaborate with schools and institutions to implement Farm to School and Farm to Institution programs to increase the purchase of locally grown ingredients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of farm to school programs Number of farm to institution programs 	Medium	CCAN
2. Partner with local agricultural organizations to support the development of a regional food hub network to increase the efficiency of food distribution and increase markets for small and mid size producers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of food hub network 	Long	CCAN, Central Coast Ag Cooperative
3. Develop programs for farmers to “adopt” a local community institution (e.g. childcare center, family resource center or school) to distribute extra farm products and provide an educational opportunity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of an “adopt and agency” program Number of farmers and agencies participating Pounds of food donated to agencies 	Medium	Farm Bureau, CCAN, FSC
B. Enhance gleaning efforts.			
1. Establish a hotline or website to easily link produce available for gleaning with gleaners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of a hotline or database for gleaning Number of farmers using hotline Pounds of food donated through website/hotline 	Medium	Glean SLO
2. Work with growers to develop a “Plant an Extra Row” program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of growers participating in plant an extra row program Pounds of food donated through plant an extra row program 	Short	Glean SLO
3. Encourage individuals to donate surplus food from backyard gardens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pounds of fresh food donated from individuals 	Short	Glean SLO
C. Promote agriculture as an economic development tool.			

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
1. Partner with community agricultural and economic development partners to brand and market quality local food production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of food producers under the Coast Grown label. Number of distributors (restaurants, supermarkets, etc) purchasing Coast Grown products. 	Medium	CCAN
2. Support ACTION for Healthy Communities in the creation of a folio regarding the economic impact of local agriculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of folio 	Short	FSC
3. Attract and retain local food processing/ wholesaling/ distribution companies through economic development incentives (e.g. streamlined permits or tax breaks).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of local food processing/wholesaling/distribution companies 	Long	FSC, County and city governments
4. Cultivate the next generation of food producers through school programs, youth job training and community efforts that promote farming, ranching and fishing as professions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of famers Decrease in the average age of farmers 	Long	FSC, Farm Bureau, Cal Poly Center for Sustainability, CCAN
D. Protect and enhance food production resources (e.g. land, water, air quality) and raise public awareness of threats to productivity.			
1. Preserve ag land and limit commercial uses on ag land through public education and advocacy on issues such as "right to farm," Williamson Act and land use planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total acreage in farmland % of total revenue generated from non-farm sales/services rendered on ag land Acreage of farmland under Williamson Act contracts 	Long	FSC, Farm Bureau
2. Conduct local Food Shed Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of CCAN's assessment 	Medium	CCAN

Goal 4. Collaborative community efforts to address the root causes of hunger in San Luis Obispo County.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
A. Make ending hunger a community priority in the County.			
1. Reach out to community agencies, coalitions and groups, and local government to review this plan, identify their role, adopt action steps and endorse an anti-hunger campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of agencies who sign declaration of support Number of agencies who agree to take part in plan implementation 	Short	FSC

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
2. Educate the community about the state of hunger and malnutrition in SLO County through a multi-agency PR Campaign to explain interconnectedness of poverty, hunger and wages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of PR campaign Favorable trends in online/ social media tracking of campaign 	Medium	FSC, Food Bank
3. Collaborate with other organizations combating poverty, homelessness, hunger and lack of healthcare to advocate for economic and social justice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of collaboration on economic and social justice issues 	Long	FSC
B. Increase use of existing programs and services that can help families meet financial, health and social needs.			
1. Partner with California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) to implement a program for students to intern at health, social services and food programs to connect low-income persons with community services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of students involved Number of agencies participating in program Number of clients referred to the service 	Long	FSC
2. Work with agencies such as Family Resource Centers, Head Start and Food Bank to conduct Earned Income Tax Credit outreach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of clients provided EITC assistance 	Short	FSC, Food Bank
C. Expand access to low-cost healthcare and pharmaceuticals to reduce a family's dilemma of paying for food or medicine.			
1. Increase publicity about and help connect people to the health coverage programs (Medi-Cal, CMSP, Healthy Families), Community Health Centers and no-cost health clinics (SLO Noor Clinic) for healthcare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people using Medi-Cal, CMSP, and Healthy Families health coverage programs Number of people utilizing health services at Community Health Centers and Noor Clinic 	Medium	FSC
2. Educate food insecure persons about programs for filling pharmacy needs such as Pharmaceutical Alliance and Community Health Centers pharmacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people utilizing Pharmaceutical Alliance and Community Health Centers pharmacy services 	Short	Food Bank
D. Increase the number of head-of-household jobs, and availability and affordability of housing and transportation through partnering with existing county efforts.			

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
1. Support and collaborate with Homeless Services Oversight Council, Housing Trust Fund, housing authorities, Peoples' Self Help Housing, and the new SLO County Department of Social Services (DSS) homeless services coordinator.	▪ Number of people paying more than 30% of their income on rent	Medium	FSC
2. Work with Economic Vitality Corporation, chambers of commerce, large employers, and municipal planning agencies to increase the number of well-paying jobs in County.	▪ Number of head-of-household jobs	Long	FSC
3. Support and advocate for improved public transit and reduced fares for CalFresh and WIC recipients to increase access to food, healthcare and social services.	▪ Expansion of transit lines that connect low-income neighborhoods to goods and services	Long	FSC

Goal 5: A vibrant SLO County Food System Coalition and an effective Hunger-Free Community Plan.

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
A. Strengthen the SLO County Food System Coalition by having an engaged and effective membership and maintaining alliances with local, state and national organizations.			
1. Ensure the agricultural sectors are adequately represented within the Food System Coalition, and that the Coalition is working towards agricultural issues.	▪ Number of agricultural representatives on coalition	Short	FSC
2. Align with statewide and national organizations that advocate for Food System Coalition goals of sustainable local food systems.	▪ Number of statewide and national organizations with which FSC has affiliated	Short	FSC
3. Pursue funding to ensure sufficient administrative support for the Food System Coalition to continue its operations.	▪ Creation of an administrative committee with defined term and responsibilities	Short	FSC
B. Establish a Food System Coalition Advocacy Committee to engage in advocacy and community education around local, state and national issues.			
1. Research and recommend positions to FSC on state and national issues such as Farm Bill, child nutrition and SNAP.	▪ Semi-annual update/discussion with Coalition on state and national issues	Medium	FSC

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME	LEAD AGENCY
2. Research and recommend positions to FSC on local issues such as agricultural preservation, regulations to increase the availability of nutritious food, economic development and public program participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-annual update/discussion with Coalition on local issues 	Medium	FSC
3. Host FSC forums on public policy issues that impact access to nutritious food in San Luis Obispo County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of forums hosted in five years 	Long	FSC
C. Review the Hunger-Free Community Plan on an annual basis.			
1. Establish indicators with community organizations for tracking progress on plan implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create indicators that will be adopted as part of the final plan, as well as a time frame and lead agency for each strategy Establish baseline indicators and measure annually. 	Short	FSC Food Bank, FSC
2. Review strategies for possible modifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review of plan by the Food System Coalition 	Short	Food Bank, FSC
3. Provide an annual report to the community on progress in eliminating hunger in San Luis Obispo County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and disseminate annual report 	Medium	FSC

Glossary

Access: Ability to reach.

CalFresh: Known nationally as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and formerly as the Food Stamp Program, CalFresh provides low-income households with supplemental dollars to buy food or seeds.

Child and Adult Care Food Program: A USDA program that provides meals and snacks to children at family day care homes, childcare centers, homeless shelters, and after-school programs, and to older or functionally impaired adults at adult day care centers.

Earned Income Tax Credit: A refundable federal income tax credit for low to moderate income working individuals and families.

EBT: Acronym for Electronic Benefits Transfer, An EBT is an electronic system that automates the delivery, redemption, and reconciliation of issued public assistance benefits. EBT is the method for distributing CalFresh benefits, California Food Assistance Program benefits, and cash aid benefits.

Equitable: Abundant and available to all.

Farm to Institution/ Farm to School: programs that connects K-12 schools, colleges, hospitals, corporate cafeterias and local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals improving nutrition, providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities, and supporting local and regional farmers.

Food Hub: A business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand.

Food insecurity: The USDA has two classifications of food insecurity. This plan does not distinguish between the two levels. When food insecurity is discussed, it is inclusive of both levels.

- Low food security: Reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet; little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake.

- Very low food security: Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.

Food producer: Farmer, rancher or fisher that produces food commercially.

Food security: Access by all people at all times to enough nutritious food for an active, healthy life.

Food Security Assessment: Study conducted by STRIDE that consisted of over 800 face to face surveys. Assessment gathered information about food security at the household level and characteristics specific to populations that may be at risk for food insecurity in San Luis Obispo County.

Food Store Survey: A study conducted by STRIDE that measured the availability and accessibility of food in 45 food stores throughout San Luis Obispo County.

Gleaning: The collection of leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or from fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest, or the collection of surplus produce from backyards and gardens of community residents.

Head-of-household job: Stable, requiring a certain level of education or skill, offering the opportunity for promotion, providing healthcare benefits, and offering a salary that enables the employee to support dependents while having some disposable income.

Health promoting: Supports the physical and mental health of all participants in the food system.

Healthy Corner Store projects: Partnerships between advocates and local corner store owners that seek to improve the availability, quality, and affordability of healthy foods.

Healthy Mobile Vending: The selling whole unprocessed produce from portable vehicles.

Hunger: Uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food; the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food.

Hunger-Free Community Project: A project consisting of three assessments, the formation of the SLO County Food System Coalition, and the development of a strategic plan to end hunger in San Luis Obispo County. This project was funded by the USDA Hunger-Free Communities grant program, which was created to provide public funding for comprehensive and collaborative efforts to end hunger at the community level.

Local food system: Food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management as well as associated supporting and regulatory institutions and activities in San Luis Obispo County.

National School Lunch Program: A federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions that provides low-cost or free lunches to children each school day.

Poverty: If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. Poverty thresholds are the dollar amounts used to determine poverty status. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated for inflation using Consumer Price Index.

Profitable: Meaning profitable for all participants in the food system.

Resilient: Thrives in the face of challenges like unpredictable climate, increased pest resistance, declining and increasingly expensive water and energy supplies.

SLO County Food System Coalition: A group formed as part of the Hunger-Free Communities grant, which includes a diverse group of stakeholders involved in some component of the San Luis Obispo food system.

School Breakfast Program: A federal program that provides cash assistance to States to operate nonprofit breakfast programs in schools and residential childcare institutions.

Sustainable: Equitable, profitable, resilient, and health promoting

STRIDE: Standing for Science through Translational Research in Diet and Exercise, this research group was founded by the Cal Poly Kinesiology department and focuses on promoting healthy weight across the lifespan. STRIDE conducted the Food Security Assessment and Food Store Survey as part of the Hunger-Free Communities Project.

Vulnerable populations: The unemployed and underemployed, families living in poverty, senior citizens, the working poor, and other similar groups that struggle with food security.

WIC: Commonly used abbreviation for the Women Infants and Children Nutrition Program, a USDA program that provides low-income pregnant women, new mothers, and children under the age of five with nutritious foods, nutrition education and referrals to health and other social services.

References

- Applied Survey Research. (2010). ACTION for Healthy Communities. Watsonville, CA: Author.
- Ayres, B., Bradley, G., Daly, M., Dean, S., Gulick, M., Horne, K., ... Wolfson, H. (2008). A Blue print to end hunger.
- Barham, J., Tropp, D., Enterline, K., Farbman, J., Fisk, J., & Kiraly, S. (2012). Regional food hub resource guide. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service. Retrieved from
- Bell, J., & Standish, M. (2009). Building healthy communities through equitable food access. Community Development Investment Review, 5 (3) 75-87.
- California Food Policy Advocates, (2010). 2010 San Luis Obispo County nutrition and food insecurity profile. Retrieved from <http://cfpa.net/county-profiles-2010>
- California Health Interview Survey [CHIS]. (2007)
- California State Department of Education. (2012a) Ed-Data: Fiscal, Demographic, and Performance Data on California's K-12 Schools
http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/App_Resx/EdDataClassic/fsTwoPanel.aspx?#!bottom=/_layouts/EdDataClassic/profile.asp?Tab=1&level=05&reportnumber=16&county=40
- California State Department of Education. (2012b). Data and statistics. 2011 summer meal sites: San Luis Obispo County. Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sh/sn/sfs201140.asp>
- California State Department of Education. (2012c). Data and statistics: Food programs. SNP 2010-11 county profile. Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sh/sn/#annual>
- Centers for Disease Control. (2012). Local school wellness policy. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/wellness.htm>
- Central Coast Ag Network. (2011). Food resource guide. San Luis Obispo, Ca: Pasciuto, K.
- Crabb, J. (2012, March 6). Panel discussion. Demystifying regional food systems: A new look at an evolving trend in farming and food. Lecture conducted by Center for Sustainability, Cal Poly Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.
- Economic Vitality Corporation [EVC]. (2011.) Go business! Clusters. Retrieved from <http://www.sloevc.org/slo-county-business/slo-county-clusters.php>
- Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County [Food Bank]. (2012).
- Food Research and Action Center. (2010). Hunger and obesity? Making the connections.
- GleanSLO. (n.d.). GleanSLO. Retrieved from <http://www.gleanslo.org/>
- Hansen, C. (2012, November 24). Viewpoint: Grant will reveal hunger realities in SLO County. The Tribune. Retrieved from <http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2011/11/24/1848289/viewpoint-grant-will-reveal-hunger.html#storylink=misearch>
- Hatfield, D., & Gunnell, A. (2005). Food access in California today.
- Insight, Center for Community Economic Development. (2011) How much is enough in San Luis Obispo County? Retrieved from <http://www.insightcced.org/communities/cfess/ca-sssold/SSS-San-Luis-Obispo-12.html>
- Lawrence, G., Lyons, K., & Wallington, T. (Eds.), Introduction. Food security, nutrition and sustainability. New York and London: Earthscan.
- McIntyre, J. (2012, March 6). Demystifying regional food systems: A new look at an evolving trend in farming and food. Lecture conducted by Center for Sustainability, Cal Poly Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.

- National Association of Home Builders (2012). State and local data. NABH/Wells Fargo housing opportunity index: 1st quarter 2012 by affordability rank. Retrieved from http://www.nahb.org/reference_list.aspx?sectionID=132
- National Cancer Institute. (n.d.) NCI health information tip sheet for writers: Diet and diseases. Retrieved from <http://www.cancer.gov/newscenter/entertainment/tipsheet/diet-related-diseases>
- Public Health Law and Policy, & Raimi and Associates. (2008). How to create and implement healthy general plans. Retrieved from <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/toolkit-how-create-and-implement-healthy-general-plans>
- Public Health Law & Policy. (2009a). NPLAN: Healthy mobile vending policies. Retrieved from <http://www.nplanonline.org/childhood-obesity/products/healthy-mobile-vending-policies>
- Public Health Law & Policy (2009b). Healthy corner stores: The state of the movement. Retrieved from <http://www.phlpnet.org/healthy-planning/products/healthy-corner-stores>
- San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture. (2010). Reflections: 2010 annual report.
- San Luis Obispo County, Department of Planning and Building. (1999). Economic element of the San Luis Obispo County general plan. Retrieved from http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/General_Plan__Ordinances_and_Elements/Elements.htm
- San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services. (2012). Food assistance. Retrieved from http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/dss/Food_Stamps.htm
- Settevendemie, M. (2012, January 11). SLO County Food System Coalition Meeting.
- SLO County Food System Coalition. (2012). Charter.
- State of California Employment Development Department. (2012). San Luis Obispo-Paso Robles metropolitan statistical area (MSA). Retrieved from [http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/slo\\$pds.pdf](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/slo$pds.pdf)
- STRIDE. (2012). Hunger-Free Communities: Characterizing vulnerable populations in San Luis Obispo County. Retrieved from http://www.slofoodbank.org/about_hunger.php
- U.C. Cooperative Education San Luis Obispo County. (2012). UC CallFresh nutrition education program. Retrieved from http://cesanluisobispo.ucdavis.edu/Youth_FSNEP/
- U.S. Census of Agriculture. (2007). County profile: San Luis Obispo County California. Retrieved from www.agcensus.usda.gov/.../2007/.../County.../California/cp06079.pdf
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). DP1. Profile of general population and housing characteristics: 2010.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). DP03. Selected economic characteristics.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). S2401. Occupation by sex and median earnings in the past 12 months (in 2010 inflation-adjusted dollars) for the civilian employed population 16 years and over.
- U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap. (2010). Work area profile analysis, San Luis Obispo County. Retrieved from <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD]. (2012) Affordable housing. Retrieved from <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/>
- Winne, M., Joseph, H., & Fisher, A. (Ed.). (1997). Community food security: A guide to concept, design and implementation. Retrieved from www.foodsecurity.org/CFSguidebook1997.PDF

Declaration of Support

Food is a basic necessity; it is what nourishes and sustains us, yet many households struggle to put food on the table. Locally, about 40,000 San Luis Obispo County residents either go hungry on a regular basis or sometimes do not know when or where they will get their next meal. Ending hunger will need to be a community-wide effort. Please help in the development of a thriving, sustainable, and local food economy in San Luis Obispo County in which every resident has access to fresh, nutritious food without compromising the ability of the system to meet the needs of future generations.

We envision a future for San Luis Obispo County, which includes:

1. Access to nutritious food for all residents;
2. Improved nutrition of County residents who experience food insecurity;
3. A sustainable local food system that is able to meet the food needs of all residents;
4. Collaborative community efforts to address the root causes of hunger;
5. A vibrant SLO County Food System Coalition and effective Hunger-Free Community plan.

We support the San Luis Obispo Food System Coalition's Hunger-Free Communities Plan through practice, policy, and planning and implementation to alleviate hunger and increase nutrition among all residents of San Luis Obispo County.

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Title/Position: _____

City: _____

Representation (are you signing on....)

☐ As an individual ☐ For your organization

Phone: _____

Email: _____

I/ This organization will commit to the following action(s) to help achieve the goals of the Hunger-Free Communities Plan (optional):

Thank you for your support!

Signed Declarations of Support can be mailed to: Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County | 2212 Golden Hill Road | Paso Robles, CA 93446